

THE SMART SET

SMART—Clever; witty; acute; quick; lively.—*Webster's Dictionary.*

THE NIGHT HAWK

By Edgar Jepson

THE sinking sun shone with a warm brightness through the window of the flat of the Honorable James Daubenay, in Gunnery Mansions, S. W. It was the flat of a man of taste. On the right wall a fine picture of Otaheitan beauties by Gauduin was somewhat spoiled by a statuette, on a bracket beside it, of a singularly weak ugliness, by Pigasso. On the left wall was a cubist picture of a triangular man, with a square beard, hanging by a rope which both the unfortunate's weight and the hand of the artist had failed to draw straight. On the back wall was an elaborate, hideous but inexplicable daub by a rising futurist.

Mr. William Pelly, the faithful servant of the Honorable James Daubenay, came into the room on faltering feet and with a gloomy air, carrying the evening papers. He set them on the table, went to the window, looked out and opened his mouth in a prodigious yawn. Then, wearily, he drew down the blinds and switched on the electric light. He yawned again, knocked at the door of his master's bedroom, entered, switched on the light, and said in a firm, cold voice: "It's a quarter to eight, sir."

The Honorable James Daubenay awoke with the clear head of one who has had a good day's rest, his wits in full working order.

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"Any letters?" he said.

"No, sir," said Pelly.

"Thank goodness for that," said the Honorable James Daubenay piously.

"Anything in the papers?"

"No, sir," said Pelly.

"Thank goodness for that," said the Honorable Daubenay yet more piously. "I shan't have to look at them."

Pelly sighed heavily.

Daubenay raised himself on his elbow and said, in a somewhat sharp tone:

"Are you at a funeral?"

"No, sir—no, sir," said Pelly quickly. "What will you have for breakfast, sir?"

The Honorable James Daubenay gazed at him sternly for half a minute. Then, sinking back on to his pillow, he said:

"A sole, and eggs and bacon."

The bell of the telephone on the side table rang as Pelly came out of the bedroom. As he put the receiver to his ear the firm, strong voice of Miss Eve Montresor rang on it, saying:

"Is that Mr. Daubenay's?"

"Yes, this is us, miss," said Pelly, in a tone of resignation.

"Is he up yet?"

"Just going to have his bath, miss."

"Well, tell him the Night Hawks will be coming round in about an hour—all of us."

"Yes, miss," said Pelly sadly.

He gave the message, turned on the taps in the bathroom and filled the bath. Then he laid the breakfast table. His master rose and bathed and was shaved. Then, while he finished dressing, Pelly got to his cooking.

He had just finished grilling the sole, and was breaking the eggs ready for the frying pan, when there came a knock at the door of the flat. He opened it, to find his master's friend, Mr. Arthur Scudamore, a tall, bronzed, keen-eyed man of thirty, standing on the threshold.

"Well, Pelly, how are you?" he asked cheerfully.

"You back, sir?" said Pelly; and his face brightened, for Scudamore was the friend of his master of whom he most approved.

"Yes, I'm back. Had excellent sport, too. Where's your master? Is he in?" said Scudamore, in the brisk, rather loud tones of a man who has been leading an outdoor life.

"He's just getting up, sir," said Pelly; and he tried vainly to smother a yawn.

"Getting up? Isn't he well?" said Scudamore.

"Oh, yes, sir, he's quite well. He's just going to have his breakfast, sir," said Pelly quietly, but in a tone of pained resignation.

"Going to have his breakfast? What on earth do you mean?" said Scudamore, in a tone of lively surprise.

"Don't ask me, sir," said Pelly with an air of mournful reluctance.

"But I *am* asking you," cried Scudamore. "I've been away only six months, after all. That isn't long enough for him to have got as bad as this."

"Nobody feels the change more than I do, sir," said Pelly with genuine feeling.

"But how did it come about? And why?" said Scudamore earnestly.

"Why? I don't know, sir. But as to 'how,' about three weeks ago—quite all of a sudden—we left our chambers in Bury Street and came here. Such an address, sir!"

"It's not particularly reassuring—I expect it frightened his tailor to death;

and it doesn't sound particularly restful," said Scudamore, on whose ears the evening song of the newspaper venders was still ringing clearly.

"Restful?" said Pelly, yawning. "Restful, sir? Oh, the thought of that word—"

"But why isn't he up? He used to be up by half past two at the latest—always," Scudamore broke in.

"Ah, half past two; that did give me a chance, sir. I never could sleep in the daytime. I ask you, sir: am I the figure of a man wot—"

"Oh, hang it all, don't ask me!" broke in Scudamore impatiently. "But explain what's happened."

"Well, sir, now we live by night—at least Mr. James does. We don't keep no clothes but dress suits nowadays," said Pelly, with a kind of mournful triumph.

"Nothing but dress suits!" cried Scudamore.

"We never wear nothing else—never," said Pelly firmly.

"But why? What does it all mean?"

"It means, sir, that if this goes on I shall have to leave, or the Night 'Awks will be responsible for my premature decease," said Pelly in the tone of a martyr.

"You certainly do look a bit thinner than you did before I went away," said Scudamore, regarding him more closely, but not with a sympathetic eye.

"A bit thinner! Why, Mr. Daubenay's clothes simply hang on me anyhow nowadays. They used to fit," said Pelly, mournfully indignant.

"Did they? And who and what are these birds who are destroying you? You said 'birds,' didn't you?"

"'Awks, sir—the Night 'Awks—a new club—very select, sir—limited to six gentlemen and six female members," said Pelly in an important tone.

"Mr. Daubenay's latest, I suppose."

"Yes, sir. He's president of the club. But I must be seeing to his bacon and eggs, sir. He'll have finished dressing in a minute."

"Bacon and eggs! At this hour!" cried Scudamore.

"Yes, sir; his breakfast, sir. At half

past eight we begins the day. Shall I cook you something, sir?"

"No, thanks; a whiskey and soda presently."

"Very good, sir," said Pelly; and he set out the whiskey and soda and left the room.

Scudamore helped himself to a drink, and was raising his glass to his lips when his eye fell on the cubist picture of the square-bearded but triangular unfortunate with the rope round his neck. He lowered his glass and examined it with the care it deserved. He turned away from it with an air of considerable bewilderment, and was halfway through his drink when his eye fell on the masterpiece of the futurist. The bewilderment on his bronzed face increased; then he turned away from the masterpiece and finished his whiskey and soda, gazing sternly out of the window.

The door of the bedroom opened; and the Honorable James Daubenay stood on the threshold, smiling a smile of an amiability rare indeed in a man-about-town approaching his breakfast table.

At the sight of Scudamore his face grew brighter, and he came quickly to him. He caught Scudamore's hand in a grip which made that hard sportsman wince, and cried joyfully:

"Hullo, Scuds! You back? This is splendid! Had good sport?"

"Fine," said Scudamore.

"Why didn't you cable me you were coming? It's such a shock to my tender nerves having the sudden surprises at breakfast time."

"I did cable," said Scudamore.

"Then I wonder why the deuce they didn't forward it to me?" said Daubenay sharply.

"Well, I went round to Bury Street for you; but you weren't there, and they didn't know your address."

"No; they're supposed to forward things to the club. But how are you, old man?" said Daubenay, looking him over with an air of pleased affection.

"I'm as fit as a fiddle. You ought to come out to Canada—it would buck you up," said Scudamore heartily.

"No, I don't think it would suit me.

I'm too delicate," said Daubenay. "As a matter of fact, I'm getting very fit myself since I turned over a new leaf."

"Pelly said something about that new leaf," said Scudamore.

"Yes; I've made a great discovery—the discovery of the century."

"Well, what is the great discovery?"

"It's very simple. I just don't get up," said Daubenay, with his best air of the great discoverer.

"You never did."

"But I tried to; and when I think of the enormous amount of nervous energy I wasted on that awful, shattering effort to get up in the morning, it simply appalls me."

"So now you don't try at all?"

"Never. I've given up ruining my constitution by the effort. And you don't know the difference it makes. Why, day after day I get ten hours' sleep, and every now and then eleven. It's making another man of me."

Pelly entered bearing the grilled sole and toast.

"No, no; take it away, Pelly. Bring me my hat. I'm going to take Mr. Scudamore to the Carlton to dine," said Daubenay.

"Thanks very much. But I've already dined," said Scudamore; and he flushed under his friend's look of pained surprise. Then he went on in hasty explanation. "You see, in Canada one gets into early hours—in the backwoods, that is. Generally we turned in about nine."

"A disgusting habit—going to bed just as intelligent people are finishing their breakfasts," said Daubenay coldly; and he sat down and took up his knife and fork.

"Yes; that's all very well. But what do you do for company? Of course you get on all right up to about three o'clock; but after that people go to bed, and you must find it devilish lonely."

"Not a bit of it! You don't suppose that a great discovery like this doesn't attract followers, do you?" said Daubenay quickly. "If you do, you're wrong. They're coming in."

"I suppose they would," said Scudamore thoughtfully.

"You must join us," enthused Daubenay—"as soon as you get out of this beastly Canadian habit of going to bed at breakfast time. I tell you what: we'll make you a country member till this Canadian habit has worn off."

"No; I think not."

"Oh, yes, we will," said Daubenay firmly. "I say, have some tea."

"No, thanks; not at this time of night," said Scudamore quickly.

"But it's the proper time for it. You *must* change your habits, you really *must*. You've no notion how delightful life can be till you've slept by day and lived by night. It will make another man of you."

"Evidently," said Scudamore drily.

"I don't know whether I shall be home to lunch or not," Daubenay said to Pelly. "It depends on what food they've got at the Corinthian. But I hope there's plenty in the house."

"Yes, sir; lunch for a dozen, sir—cold," said Pelly; and he tried in vain to smother a prodigious yawn as he went out.

"I say, why did you move from Bury Street? It took me two days to track you," said Scudamore.

"Splendid!" said Daubenay joyfully.

"Splendid?" said Scudamore doubtfully.

"I'm glad you found me; but I'm glad you found the tracking difficult," said Daubenay. Then, in a sudden tone of anxiety, he added: "You haven't given my address to anybody by any chance?"

"Only to Lady Wynne," said Scudamore.

"Only to Lady Wynne! *Only* to Lady Wynne! *ONLY* to Lady Wynne!" howled Daubenay, crescendo.

"Well, why not? She has a right to know it: she's your aunt," protested Scudamore.

"My aunt! Would you give a man's address to his uncle, if you thought he was lying low?"

"No. But an aunt—"

"Feminist!" cried Daubenay in a tone of the most violent scorn.

"Hang it all! She didn't ask me straight out. She somehow wormed it out of me."

"Well, you were a blithering idiot to let her. Now she'll call," said Daubenay in a tone of despair. He sat down very heavily in an easy chair.

Scudamore gazed at him with an air of depression. Then he said in a hopeful tone:

"After all, what does it matter if she does call? You won't be up."

"And what difference will that make, I should like to know?" said Daubenay in unabated dejection. "You know what she is. She'll force her way in and badger me from the end of the bed, on the ground that she's my aunt and a married woman. Was Cynthia with her?"

"Yes," said Scudamore.

"If you haven't done it! You didn't know that I've been engaged to her twice?"

"Twice!" said Scudamore.

"Yes. And it's entirely owing to my second engagement to her that I'm leading the healthy night life."

"It is, is it?" said Scudamore unhappily.

"Yes. Cynthia wanted to celebrate our second engagement by giving a lunch at the Ritz—public announcement and that sort of thing, you know. I forgot all about it, and slept on far into the afternoon. When I got round about half past four I thought she seemed a bit worried. But she didn't say anything at the moment, not till I got to my third cup of tea, in fact; then she asked me quite nicely what time I got up. I'm an awful poor liar; and she was always very sympathetic about my little weakness, so I told her. Then she explained."

"Well, *she* won't call. There's no fear of that," said Scudamore in a tone of satisfaction.

"Oh, won't she? She's a devilish strong-minded woman, is Cynthia; and I've a fancy that she was beginning to forgive me and returning to the charge once again. You are a tactless beggar, you know," said Daubenay very gloomily.

"I'm awfully sorry. But how was I to know? You should have gone out of town," said Scudamore. "But tell

me about something else—these Night Hawks of yours—what are they like? I suppose they're frightful bounders!"

"Well, they have their little ways. But there's so much bounding nowadays. After all, they'd put up quite a decent show beside Aunt Mary and her set," said Daubenay thoughtfully.

"But all the same, you must hate this kind of life," said Scudamore.

"I do not," said Daubenay firmly. "I'm sick of the society business; and this suits me. At the present moment, too, the Hawks amuse me."

There came a knocking at the door of the flat and a ring.

"Here are some of them," said Daubenay, in a tone of cheerful expectation.

There was a sound of women's voices in the hall. Pelly opened the door, yawned prodigiously, and said:

"Lady Wynne and Mrs. Constantine."

II

LADY WYNNE, large and round of body, square of face, with small, keen eyes set rather close to a thin but far-projecting, arched nose, her complexion of a purplish tinge under its thick layer of powder, bustled heavily into the room. Cynthia Constantine, slim, of rather stiff movements, with larger eyes and smaller nose than her mother, but none the less conveying a suggestion of the same virile and predatory spirit and, if anything, even more thickly made up, entered more slowly, striving to impart a willowy grace to her figure as she moved. Neither of them was a blood relation of Daubenay. Lady Wynne was an aunt by marriage, Cynthia Constantine her daughter by an earlier husband than his uncle.

Lady Wynne bustled up to him and said, in a thin, bright, bleating voice which went very ill with her massive figure:

"Don't swear, Jim. It's too late. We're here."

"But this is delightful," said Daubenay with his gloomiest air.

"Liar," said Cynthia sweetly as she shook hands with him. "You're a per-

fidious wretch, Jim. Why didn't you come to our dinner party on the eighth?"

"Now why didn't I?" responded Daubenay with an expression of perplexity. "Oh, I remember: I'd just finished breakfast."

"Don't be ridiculous!" said Cynthia somewhat tartly. "That's no reason at all; one doesn't go to dinner parties just to eat."

"I do," said Daubenay quickly.

"Nonsense! And why did you change your flat without letting us know your new address?" she demanded.

"I didn't think it would interest you. In fact, after what occurred, I thought it would be more delicate to disappear quietly."

"Nonsense! I believe—I believe you're up to one of your pranks," said Cynthia, looking at him with very searching eyes.

"Nothing of the kind," said Daubenay firmly. "I've simply retired from the world, and I'm leading the simple life all by myself."

"Well, you'll find that you can't get rid of your relations as easily as all that," bleated Lady Wynne.

"As a matter of fact, we've come to offer the olive branch," said Cynthia with a bright smile.

"No, no; no olive branches, thanks. They don't go with the decorations of the flat," said Daubenay hastily.

Lady Wynne looked at him with an almost belligerent air, as she bleated in an imperative tone:

"But what made you want to disappear like this? It's really very extraordinary."

"I've told you. I treated Cynthia badly—"

"You did—disgracefully!" said Cynthia, with the same bright smile.

"Oh, well, hardly disgracefully," Daubenay protested. "It was an accident any unmarried girl would have forgiven—"

"An accident? It was a habit!" cried Cynthia; and her smile was a little wintry.

"That's what I keep telling you: I've retired into seclusion to break myself off it," said Daubenay with considerable

heat. "I'm getting into the way of regular hours."

"Oh, mother, look; he's got a new picture," said Cynthia. She drew her mother in front of the masterpiece of the futurist; and while they gazed at it, with exclamations, Daubenay contrived to get Scudamore near the door and hiss at him:

"Get them away, man! Get them away! The Hawks will be here in a few minutes; and there'll be the deuce to pay! It's your fault they're here; and it's up to you to get them away!"

"That's all very well, but—"

"What is it, Jim? What does it mean? What is the subject?" croaked Lady Wynne, pointing to the masterpiece.

"It depends on the artist's mood," said Daubenay. "If he's feeling gloomy, it's 'The Loss of the *Titanic*,' and if he's feeling cheerful, it's 'Irish Haymakers in a Scotch Hayfield.'"

"You *are* a rotter, Jim. What is it really?" said Cynthia.

"I've just told you!" cried Daubenay indignantly. "If it isn't 'Scotch Haymakers in an Irish Hayfield,' what is it?"

"Goodness knows!" said Cynthia, turning away. "Why, what's this?" she cried; her roaming eye had fallen on the teapot. "Do you drink tea at this time of night?"

"And why not?" said Daubenay stiffly.

"And eat bacon and eggs?" continued Cynthia, gazing at the telltale plate with amazed eyes.

"Certainly; high tea," said Daubenay with his most dignified air.

"You must be ruining your constitution. You want taking in hand at once," croaked Lady Wynne with deep conviction. "We must take better care of you."

"How could you do it?" she asked him, drawing him aside. "To slip away like this—it wasn't kind. Cynthia has suffered terribly. Ah, Jim, with all your faults she loves you still," she croaked pathetically.

"Then she evidently doesn't know all my faults," said Daubenay.

"Nonsense. You're the most transparent person in the world—weak, perhaps—very weak—but with an affectionate wife to lean on—"

"I don't want any affectionate wife to lean on!" snapped Daubenay.

"Jim, I know what's best for you. Promise me that you'll call tomorrow—about six. I'll see to it that you and Cynthia have a nice talk without interruption. Many girls would feel that they owed it to themselves to keep you hanging about for months after the way you've behaved. But Cynthia is different. She has such a sweet nature."

"Yes, yes; that's what's the matter with me—I've got a sweet nature, too," said Daubenay quickly. "It would never do for us to marry. We shouldn't be the slightest use to one another. That settles it," said Daubenay quickly.

"Don't talk nonsense!" she bleated, with a sudden glare in her eyes. "I shall expect you tomorrow at six—without fail. I insist on it—absolutely insist!"

"Oh, very well—nothing would give me greater pleasure, of course," said Daubenay wearily.

III

He rang the bell after they had gone, and Pelly came in, smothering a yawn.

"Pelly, we shall have to change again," said Daubenay in a tone of dejection.

"Our 'abits?" asked Pelly, brightening at the thought.

"No; our address," said Daubenay.

Pelly's face fell; and in a tone of weary indifference, he said:

"Yes, sir: further west still, sir, I suppose."

"I don't know about that. We might move eastward. There's Long Acre now—no one would look for us in Long Acre," said Daubenay thoughtfully.

"No, sir," said Pelly; and with an air of resignation, he began to clear away the breakfast things.

"Did you go and try on my new dress suit today?" asked Daubenay.

"Yes, sir. It looks as if it was going

to be first class, sir," said Pelly with a touch of enthusiasm.

"I tell you what: it will be pretty awful if this change in our habits produces any difference in our figures. It would never do for you to get thin while I filled out," said Daubenay in a sudden disquietude.

There came the sound of high-pitched, excited women's voices from the landing. Someone pressed the button of the bell hard. Another plied the knocker with a will. About a dozen people hammered on the door; and a score, apparently, yelled: "Daubs! Daubs!! Daubs!!!"

"It's them 'Awks, sir," said Pelly in a tone of cold disapproval.

"It does sound like them. They seem in good spirits. Let them in," said Daubenay cheerfully.

Pelly bore the tray to his pantry with the air of a pallbearer at his own funeral. Then he opened the door and stepped sharply back.

He was not quite quick enough. Five or six white but apparently brawny arms propelled him across the hall and into the dining room with such vigor that he was almost flung at his master's feet. However, they held him up, set him in the middle of the room and four ladies and two gentlemen danced round him, uttering more or less mellow yells.

They whooped and danced for about a minute; then suddenly they desisted and turned their attention to Daubenay.

"Hullo! Hullo! Hullo! The same old Daubs again!" said Madame Leonille, shaking him warmly by the hand. "How are you?"

"How are you? Charmed to see you all," said Daubenay, smiling upon them.

"Always merry and bright," said Miss Eve Montresor, in a high-pitched, rather strident voice. She helped Madame Leonille in her hat shop, and was wearing a very striking hat, which did not at all match in either form or color the Italian peasant girl's dress she was wearing. But it was quite clear from her expression that hers was one of those happy natures which so trifling a discrepancy would never trouble.

"And how are you, Clare?" said Daubenay to Miss Clarice.

"Top of the bill as usual," said Miss Clarice. Miss Clare Clarice, well known to those who frequent the music halls as the "Polar Magnet," was wearing one of her stage dresses, a pleasant flame-colored confection, thickly sewn with spangles.

The fourth lady, Miss Sally Bangs, an unemployed serio-comic sister from the music halls, was Miss Clarice's closest friend at the moment, and was uncommonly like her in figure, face, manner and dress. In reply to Daubenay's greeting, she said simply, but huskily:

"Cheer oh!"

Mr. Billy Blake, a thin, weary-looking young man in the early twenties, nodded feebly to Daubenay. The other member of the party was O'Hara, a snub-nosed, emotional Irish concert singer, wearing a lounge suit which bore every sign of having been purchased somewhere east of Charing Cross.

IV

THE Night Hawks responded with cries of real enthusiasm when Daubenay called to Pelly to bring a bottle of champagne.

The Hawks flocked round Pelly, and helped themselves to the glasses as he filled them. Their eyes shone brightly; and for the most part they said "Cheer oh!" before they drank.

Then the lively Miss Montresor said:

"What are we going to do till it's time to go to the dance?"

"Shall I show you my new bit of business?" said the Polar Magnet at once; and she stepped forward with an air of keen determination.

"Oh, switch off the current, for goodness sake!" groaned Blake.

"I've got a little secret to tell you all," said Daubenay.

"Don't say you've gone and got married!" cried Madame Leonille.

"I know: he's found a new member—a man—for the Hawks!" cried Miss Montresor.

"No, no—nothing so exciting. It's

only that today is my birthday," said Daubenay.

"Oh, you dear old thing! Why didn't you tell me?" cried Miss Montresor. Impulsively she swung her arm round his neck and kissed him. Her example was followed on the instant by the others. Madame Leonille got in a kiss on his right cheek, Miss Bangs one on the left; the Polar Magnet pecked him on the nose.

Unabashed, Daubenay emerged from the affectionate group, saying:

"Steady, dear ones; it's rather early in the evening to kiss the president. It would be better just to drink my health." He raised his voice and called out: "Pelly! Another bottle."

It seemed as if Pelly was lingering outside the door, bottle in hand; for he entered on the instant, pulled out the cork, already unwired, and refilled the glasses.

They raised them and drank his health with enthusiasm.

"And how old are you, Daubs?" asked Miss Montresor, with the indiscreetness of her twenty-seven years.

"Hush! Nineteen," said Daubenay impressively.

The bell of the flat rang; and involuntarily they were silent to hear who had come.

A girl's voice was heard, then Pelly's.

"It's a new member; and she's a girl!" cried Miss Montresor in a tone of keen disappointment.

"It is a girl!" said Mr. Blake in some excitement.

"And you said that you didn't know a girl outside the club," said Madame Leonille in a tone of deep reproach.

"I said that not a girl outside the club knew my address," said Daubenay.

Pelly, wearing a somewhat worried air, entered.

"Please, sir," he said. "A young lady's called."

"For me?" said Daubenay.

"Hullo! Hullo! Hullo! A different girl again!" sang the Polar Magnet.

"The young lady's in a difficulty, sir," said Pelly.

"Wow, wow!" said Miss Montresor happily. The others laughed.

"But why does she come to me?" demanded Daubenay in a tone of appeal.

There was more laughter.

"She asked for Mrs. Mulcaster, sir. The lady who used to live here before we came," said Pelly.

"Mulcaster—Mulcaster—I seem to remember that name," said Madame Leonille, frowning.

"Yes, but what does she want with me? I don't know Mrs. Mulcaster," protested Daubenay.

"Well, she seems kind of upset, sir," said Pelly, in the impartial tone of one refusing to accept any responsibility.

"What, ho! Beauty in distress. Ask her in," said Blake.

"No, perhaps we'd better not," said Daubenay, frowning at him.

"There's plenty of us as it is," said the Polar Magnet.

"I say, girls—we'd better be going—we're in the way," said Madame Leonille, with a long, long wink.

"Nonsense! What for? We're only just beginning the night," said Daubenay sharply. "What's she like, Pelly?"

"Very nice little lady, sir," said Pelly, the first touch of cheerfulness in his tone. Then, drawing nearer his master, he added in a low voice: "'Ardly one of us, sir."

"A friend of Mrs. Mulcaster's, eh?" said Madame Leonille; and her face brightened with a sudden light of remembrance.

"Oh, hang it all! Bring her in," said Daubenay. "No; I'll fetch her myself."

He went briskly into the hall, followed by Pelly.

"Dear old Daubs is going to land us with the old, old love as a perfect stranger," said Blake, giving voice to the general opinion.

"He's sparing the dear girl's feelings," said O'Hara, grinning.

"I say, girls, if this is one of the Mulcaster gang, this is no place for us," said Madame Leonille gloomily. "That woman has owed me seventeen pound ten for over two years; and her character's beyond words."

"No; please come in," said Daubenay just outside the door.

On the instant the four ladies shuffled,

as it were, into a group facing the door, and assumed the bristly appearance of a square of infantry about to receive a charge of cavalry.

Then there stepped into the room a slender, demure, dark-haired, brown-eyed girl, in whose cheeks the roses were manifestly as natural as the light tan round them, on whose slightly tip-tilted nose there was not a grain of powder. She was dressed in a very simple summer frock, the poor fit of which failed to spoil the admirable lines of her figure. But on her head she wore a hat, brightly and cunningly trimmed with a shade of yellow which matched and supported her warm coloring, trimmed with so keen an eye for natural effect that it made every other hat in the room look clumsy and common.

In her hand she carried a worn wrist-bag and over her arm a raincoat.

V

At the sight of that surprising and contrasting figure on the threshold a curious change passed over the opposing square. It lost its bristliness; it wilted.

The girl paused, flushed faintly at the sight of so many strangers, and smiled diffidently. Then she came into the room with a certain naïve assurance.

Daubenay entered on her heels, saying:

"You mustn't think of running away till you've had a rest, Miss—Miss—"

"Ruth Banister," said the girl in a delightful voice.

"I'm afraid it's rather a nuisance for you to find that Mrs. Mulcaster has left her flat," said Daubenay sympathetically, after he had introduced her to the others.

"Yes," said Ruth in an unhappy tone. "She's the only friend I have in London. I thought she would help me. I—I—" and with a catch in her voice she paused on the verge of tears.

"Oh, that's all right—that's all right," said Daubenay hastily. "You must let us step into the breach. You've had a slight mishap—"

"Yes; I lost Joe," said Ruth ruefully.

"Oh, you lost Joe?" said Daubenay, a little taken aback. "Oh, well, of course—there you are—of course if you lost Joe—well—"

"I suppose Joe's your boy," said Miss Sally Banks with genuine interest.

"My boy? I don't understand," said Ruth with a puzzled air.

"Where did you lose Joe?" asked Daubenay quickly.

"Well, we came up from the country this morning by an excursion—"

"I see—you and Joe," said Daubenay.

"There, he is her boy!" said Miss Bangs in a tone of husky triumph.

"And Mrs. Burbage. She's Joe's mother," Ruth went on.

"Bit of an error that, Sally," said Billy Blake.

"Ah, yes; you came with Joe and Mrs. Burbage," said Daubenay.

"But of course you don't know who Joe is. How stupid of me! I'm so—"

"Oh, that doesn't matter—we never ask that kind of question here," said Daubenay again hastily.

"There'd be too many answers," said Billy Blake punctiliously.

"And of course I've never been up to London before," said Ruth.

"But I thought you were a friend of Mrs. Mulcaster's!" Madame Leonille broke in.

"Yes, I am," said Ruth, turning to her. "But, oddly enough, I've never seen her. She was a friend of my mother's; and she used to write to me when I was at school in Rouen. Do you know her?" said Ruth.

"I know of her," said Madame Leonille hastily.

"Seventeen pound ten," said Miss Montresor in a tone of deep meaning.

Ruth looked at her with a puzzled air and said to Daubenay:

"What does your friend mean?"

"Oh, you mustn't take any notice of her," said Daubenay in a kindly tone. "She's often taken like that. Not quite—" He tapped his forehead.

"Pig!" said Miss Montresor.

Ruth turned to Daubenay. "Why, do you know Mrs. Mulcaster?"

"I know of her," said Daubenay hastily.

"How funny! But I expect she's very popular. She always used to write very nice letters to me."

"Yes, yes; but tell us how you lost your friends," said Daubenay, eager to escape from a theme which Miss Montresor's manner had assured him was dangerous.

"Well, it was like this. After tea Mrs. Burbage went to see some friends at Notting Hill, and Joe said he'd show me the Houses of Parliament. When we got there, there was an enormous crowd of people, pushing this way and that; and there were policeman on horseback and suffragettes screaming and fighting. Then Joe let go of my arm, and we were separated in an instant; and I tried to get back to him and I couldn't. I couldn't find him anywhere."

"I see," said Daubenay. "So that was how you lost Joe." He could not make up his mind whether it was the truth or all humbug. In the course of his unmeritorious career he had more than once come across very simple innocence, and had learned the keenest distrust of it.

"Yes, and he had the tickets and my purse," said Ruth.

"But I say, you must be very tired," said Daubenay, and pushed forward an easy chair. "Pelly—another glass and some biscuits!"

The Night Hawks gazed at Ruth with varying expressions of uneasiness and bewilderment. Like Daubenay, they distrusted.

"What is it?" asked Ruth, looking at the champagne with a faint air of suspicion.

"Ginger ale—superior ginger ale," said Sally Bangs quickly.

"That's all right," said Ruth, in a tone of relief. "I was afraid it might be wine; and I never touch wine or beer. My father doesn't like me to."

She sipped the champagne, and said: "It isn't at all like the ginger ale we get at East Brenton."

"I should say not, girls," said Miss Montresor, raising her glass to Ruth with a giggle.

The others laughed.

Daubenay could not, for the life of

him, make up his mind whether Ruth was genuine or not; and he said:

"Weren't you at all frightened after you lost Joe, and found yourself alone in London without any money?"

"Just a little—at first. But I soon got all right again. There were so many people about; and I was sure that I should find somebody to help me all right," and she sipped the champagne again. She had quite lost her air of anxiety; and her cheeks had regained all their delicate coloring. Then she said seriously:

"I think I like London."

The Night Hawks laughed merrily.

Daubenay smiled an amiable, amused smile and said:

"Charmed to have made such a good impression. What can we do to deepen it? How can we amuse you?"

"I'm afraid it's too late for me to have any more amusement," she said. "But I should be very much obliged if you would show me the way to Paddington."

"I say, you're never going to catch a train tonight—that won't do at all!" cried Billy Blake.

"Of course I am. I must!" cried Ruth. "It goes between nine and half past—the excursion."

"Of course—the excursion," said Daubenay; and he smiled at Madame Leonille.

But she did not smile back, or wink, as he had expected. She was gazing at Ruth with a doubtful, puzzled air.

But Mr. Blake pulled out his watch and cried in a tone of excited satisfaction:

"Hooray! Hooray! She's missed it! She could never get to Paddington by half past nine!"

"I thought she had missed it," said Daubenay quietly.

Ruth sprang to her feet with a little cry, clasped her hands and cried:

"But whatever will father say?"

"Perhaps there's another train," suggested Daubenay.

"I'm afraid there isn't—not to East Brenton—it's such an out-of-the-way place. Oh, whatever shall I do?" she cried in great consternation.

"Why, come to the Covent Garden

ball with us," said Billy Blake enthusiastically.

"Yes, let's take her just as she is!" cried Miss Montresor.

"And label her 'Miss Buttercup,'" sneered the Polar Magnet, glowering at Ruth.

"Great idea!" said Mr. Blake.

"Well, why not?" said Daubenay, turning to Madame Leonille. "You could put her up for the rest of the morning, if she can't get a very early train."

"A dance—it would be lovely!" said Ruth with enthusiasm. "But my clothes—I can't go like this."

"But that's just how you can go. That's the advantage of Covent Garden," said Miss Sally Bangs.

"It *would* be nice," said Ruth in a tone of longing. "But whatever will my father say?"

"Oh, never mind father; we'll—we'll send him a wire, and then write and explain," said Billy Blake.

"But you don't know my father," said Ruth very gravely.

VI

"MAY I have some more ginger ale? I'm feeling quite thirsty," said Ruth to Daubenay; and she held up her glass.

"I don't think I would, if I were you," he said.

"Oh, well then, I won't," said Ruth, smiling at him.

"I don't know what you think, girls. But I think we're a bit in the way," said Madame Leonille.

"Oh, nonsense! Don't rush away," said Daubenay—not very heartily.

"What do you say to a few oysters at Scott's, girls?" asked Billy Blake.

"Right O!" cried Miss Montresor and Miss Bangs in one voice.

"And you and Miss Buttercup can pick us up at Covent Garden, Daubs," said Madame Leonille.

"Cheer up, kid! And don't you trust Daubs; he has a kind face, but he's a bold bad man," said Miss Montresor cheerfully. "So long, Daubs. Be good."

The others laughed. The Night

Hawks went noisily through the hall and out of the flat, laughing still.

"Your friends—do you know, I—I think they're rather funny," Ruth said in somewhat hesitating tones, when they had gone.

"I always try to think so," he said hopefully.

"Are many London people like that? Are they—are they—the Smart Set?"

"Now you come to speak of it, I shouldn't be surprised if they were. I've often wondered who the Smart Set was, and I believe you've guessed it at once," he said. "But I say, how is it we haven't seen you about town before—a friend of Mrs. Mulcaster?"

"I've been at school in France—at Rouen. I only came home at the beginning of the year."

"And Mrs. Mulcaster is a friend of your mother's, you say?"

"She was. My mother died a long while ago. Mrs. Mulcaster used to write to me at school and send me postal orders. I used to call her my fairy god-mother," said Ruth.

"Does your father know her?" said Daubenay.

"No. And I promised never to tell him about her—it's a secret," she said quickly.

"It seems rather odd, doesn't it?" he said.

"I suppose it does," said Ruth, frowning. "But it all came of a dreadful quarrel father and mother had just before she died. I was sent away to my aunt at Rouen when I was ever so little; and I never saw my father at all till I came home last January. Mrs. Mulcaster offered to adopt me."

"The deuce she did!" said Daubenay.

"Yes. But I thought I ought to go home to my father first at any rate, though my aunt said I should never get on with him. He is so strict."

"They often are," said Daubenay.

"Besides, I don't think he likes young girls," she said in a gloomy tone. Then she added more brightly: "Do you think I could find Mrs. Mulcaster's new address? I expect that my father will be frightfully angry about my losing Joe and missing the train; and I was think-

ing that if Mrs. Mulcaster still wanted to adopt me, it would be better not to go back to the country at all."

"But what will your father say?" asked Daubenay, with every appearance of wanting to know, though he did not believe in the existence of any father of the kind she had described.

"I don't think he'd mind at all—he doesn't really care for me, you know. Granny's the only person who would be sorry."

"What about Joe?" said Daubenay quickly.

"That's another reason why I don't like the country," she said quickly.

"Why, what has Joe been doing?" asked Daubenay. He was enjoying their talk thoroughly.

"Oh, well, you see, Joe—Joe has the next farm to ours at East Brenton, and father—well, father wants me to marry him."

She had shifted her position so that her face was nearer to him.

"Absurd," he said; and stooping quickly, he kissed her upturned lips.

She sprang from the chair and turned on him with flashing eyes.

"How dare you?" she cried. "And oh, I liked you!"

"Of course you do," said Daubenay amiably.

"I don't! I don't! I did—but I don't!" she cried fiercely.

"Well, you will again in about two minutes," said Daubenay amiably.

"Two minutes! I'm going at once!" she cried.

"Haven't you pulled my leg enough yet, little girl?" He laughed gently.

She had taken three quick steps toward the door; at his words she stopped, half turned and looked at him.

"Pulled your leg?" she cried, in plainly genuine surprise. "What do you mean?"

Daubenay, still smiling amiably, shrugged his shoulders.

She stared at him with uncomprehending eyes. Then a sudden light of understanding shone in them; and she cried in a tone of extraordinary distress:

"Why—why—you don't believe that I've been telling the truth!"

There was a poignancy in her tone which filled Daubenay with a sudden swift conviction that he had made a mistake of the worst kind. He could have kicked himself. He started forward and cried in a tone of extreme, convincing dismay:

"By Jove, you *are* real! I—I'm very sorry!"

"Real! Of course I'm real!" cried Ruth indignantly.

"Of course you are! And of course you've been telling the truth!" cried Daubenay in the same tone of dismay.

"Of course I have!" cried Ruth.

"Really, I'm very sorry—I'm very sorry, indeed. I've behaved very badly!" said Daubenay with unaffected contrition.

Her indignant face softened a little.

"It was the Mrs. Mulcaster put me all wrong," he said.

"Why, what's the matter with Mrs. Mulcaster?" she said sharply.

"Oh, well, she's—she's—oh, it's very difficult to explain," he said somewhat helplessly.

"Do you mean she's a—a Night Hawk?" she said quickly.

"That's about the size of it," he said.

The indignation faded from her face, leaving it woebegone.

"That makes a difference," she said slowly and sadly; and then, in an easier tone:

"I—I'm not so very angry, because you're so old," she said.

"So old?" said Daubenay blankly.

"Yes; if you were younger, it would have been much worse. But you are quite old enough to kiss a girl of my age—like an uncle, you know."

Daubenay gazed at her earnestly to see if she were punishing him, malignantly, for his mistake. It was indeed a blow to perceive that she was doing nothing of the kind, but speaking the dreadful, simple truth out of the simplicity of her heart.

"Oh, hang it all! I'm not as old as all that," he protested ruefully.

"I think I had better be going," she said. "I thought that as you knew friends of Mrs. Mulcaster it was all right, my stopping here and talking to you."

"Well, it is—quite all right—now that

"I know you're—er—real," said Daubenay.

"It was horrid of you to think that I was anything else!" she cried with reproachful severity.

"Yes, I suppose it does seem so to you. But you don't know what London is. It's full of queer people with queer tales," he said. "It's very hard to decide who's real and who isn't."

"And those people who were here—I suppose they're your friends?"

"Well, I have very pleasant times with the Night Hawks. We've seen the sun rise together quite a number of times, considering the short time we've known one another," said Daubenay cheerfully.

"Do you mean you've sat up all night?" asked Ruth in a shocked tone.

"I always sit up all night. I sleep in the daytime."

"Then when do you work?"

"Oh, work? I don't work," said Daubenay. "If I were to work, goodness knows what might happen! I might have a nervous breakdown, or appendicitis."

"But do you mean to say that you've never worked?" she cried in yet greater astonishment.

"Oh, well, when I was at Eton I did some; and there was the army exam., of course. But I haven't worked for years," said Daubenay.

"Then—then I'm afraid you must be a man-about-town. You can't think how my father hates and detests men-about-town," she said solemnly.

Daubenay had an inspiration.

"About that dance?" he said. "How would a motor ride do instead?"

"A motor ride—instead of a dance?" she asked doubtfully.

"Yes; I'm thinking of your father."

"The worst of it is, when I do turn up tomorrow, father probably won't believe a word I say; and he'll turn me out," she said gloomily.

"Oh, no; he won't do anything so drastic as that," said Daubenay.

"Ah, you don't know my father."

"I'm not sure that I want to. But my idea is that I should motor you down to East Brenton—I ought to be able to

get there as quick as an excursion—so that you can reach home just at the time you would reach it if you had come from the station."

VII

HAVING made up his mind that the right thing to do was to motor Ruth down to East Brenton, Daubenay lost no time setting about doing it. He got an A. B. C., and first made certain that there was no later train that Ruth could catch; then he bade Pelly bring up Briggs, his chauffeur, who was waiting below with his car.

"Look here, Briggs: this young lady has missed her train, an excursion train to East Brenton, and I want to motor her down by the time it gets there. It's sixty-five miles. Can you do it?" asked Daubenay in a tone of quite unusual vigor and firmness.

"What time is the train due at East Brenton, sir?" asked Briggs.

Daubenay looked at Ruth; and she said:

"Twelve twenty-seven."

"And it's eleven minutes to ten now," said Briggs, looking at his watch with a frown. "If it was daylight, sir, I could do it with half an hour to spare; but at night—and no moon—well, sir, it will be touch and go."

"Right you are. Come, let's work out the route," said Daubenay.

The first fifty miles of it was plain sailing to Bedford, and Briggs knew every mile of it. In Daubenay's forty-horse-power Daimler he could be nearly sure of doing it well under the two hours. But it was the last fifteen miles, across country, which would be the difficulty.

Daubenay lighted a cigar, and then named the places of interest as they passed them. In about twelve minutes the car was running out of London. When they came into the open country Ruth and Daubenay talked with greater ease. They ran through Harpenden as the church clock struck eleven; so far Briggs was ahead of time, and he had twenty-five miles' easy going before him. Knowing the road as he did, the

fact that it was night hampered him little.

After Luton, Ruth fell silent, and Daubenay found that she had fallen asleep. She did not look comfortable, and he slipped his arm round her and held her against him. He had to light his next cigar with one hand, and it was rather awkward. But he was enjoying himself. Ruth's gentle breathing was pleasant in his ear; and it was pleasant to feel that she was in the middle of the bundle of fur coat he held against him. Moreover, he was enjoying the drive as a drive. He had never before been on a motor drive at night after sleeping through the day; and he was disposed to consider it pleasanter than a motor drive by day after sleeping through the night.

One unpleasant thought would keep marring his pleasure, the thought that he would see no more of Ruth. He desired to see more, much more, of her. He was quite alive to the absurdity of the desire; there could be nothing in common between a jaded nightbird like himself and that charming child of the morning.

They reached Brixford, with sixteen minutes in which to get to East Brenton before the train. If they failed to do that, the Banister farm was a good five minutes' walk from the station and there would still be a chance of her reaching it before that sterling fellow Joe. But Daubenay wished Ruth to slip in among the passengers as they descended from the train; then no one could positively declare that she had not come by it.

VIII

It was at the second cross-roads that they took the wrong turning.

They had run two miles when they came to a railway bridge over the road.

"Oh, this is wrong! There isn't any railway bridge over the road home—the railway runs beside it," cried Ruth.

Daubenay shouted to Briggs that they were on the wrong road. Briggs stopped the car at the first gateway he came to, and set about getting her round. It was

not an easy task in that narrow lane, and it took time.

In the middle of it Daubenay's quick ear caught the distant clatter of the train.

"Here comes the train!" he cried.

They had at least three and a half miles to go to East Brenton to the train's two. Half a mile from the bridge, Daubenay, looking back, saw the train cross it. Briggs was driving more than a trifle recklessly. Just before the cross-roads the tire of the left back wheel blew up with a bang, and only his skill and wrists of steel saved them from a bad smash.

"Never mind! Send her along!" cried Daubenay cheerfully; and he held Ruth tightly and firmly.

Briggs sent her along. When they swung round into the East Brenton road they saw far ahead the lights of the train. It was almost in the station.

It was now that the five minutes to the Banister farm from the station proved useful, for the train had been gone a minute when they ran into the village.

"Straight on!" cried Ruth to Briggs. Finally the car came to a standstill forty yards from a big farmhouse.

Daubenay sprang from the car and handed Ruth out of it.

It was careless of them to make their farewells in the full light of the lamps of the car. They did not see the figure of the sterling Mr. Joseph Burbage coming quietly along on the turf beside the road, very gloomy under the oppression of his coming interview with Mr. Banister. But he saw them, and at the sight stopped short in great amazement.

They said good-bye; Ruth hurried down the road and Daubenay stood gazing after her. Once she turned and waved her hand to him.

Mr. Joseph Burbage ground his teeth.

Ruth disappeared into the garden of the farmhouse. Daubenay went round the car to watch Briggs affix the Stepney wheel.

Mr. Jacob Banister was sitting with his mother in his comfortable sitting room awaiting Ruth's return.

Since he had risen at five on the preceding morning, he was uncommonly sleepy. There was no reason in the world why he should not have awaited his daughter in an easy chair and slept away the weary hours restfully. But that was not Jacob Banister's way: it was not enough for him to do a tiresome, needless thing; he must also do it in the most uncomfortable fashion.

The truth is that he had missed his age: he should have lived in the days of Nero, or Diocletian, when he could have died happily in the arena. As it was, he could only satisfy his religious mania and his itch for martyrdom by being an uncommonly disagreeable martyr in the home, to the extreme discomfort of everyone with whom he came into contact. Ruth was the chief sufferer; she had not yet been long enough at the farm to disregard his virtuous miseries.

For about the fortieth time he pulled out his grandfather's watch and scowled at its inoffensive dial.

"Twenty past twelve," he growled. "Nice time to be gadding about! Never mind; it's the last time."

"Young folk like to go a-pleasuring," said his mother placidly.

"They think of nothing else nowadays," growled Jacob.

"You always were a hard one, Jacob," she said, in a tone of disapproval. "Mind you don't go and make the same mistake with your girl as you made with her mother."

IX

JACOB BANISTER scowled steadily at his mother. The suggestion that it was his own fault that his wife had run away from him rankled bitterly.

Presently he said heavily:

"It all came of those fine London friends of hers—a pack of smooth-tongued blackguards. If ever I get hold of any of them, I'll teach them!"

"None of that kind ever come to East Brenton nowadays," said his mother.

The distant rumble of the train struck on Jacob Banister's ears, and he said in a tone of grumpy relief:

"There's that train at last."

Once more he pulled out his grandfather's watch, looked at it, and said:

"Nearly half past twelve—a nice hour!"

Ruth had hoped to get quietly to bed without seeing her gloomy father. But he opened the door of the sitting room and said grumpily:

"So you're back at last!"

She went slowly into the sitting room, and kissed her grandmother.

"Oh, it's wrong of you, granny, to sit up till this time of night. You ought to have been in bed hours ago."

"Never you mind about me," said Mrs. Banister, smiling at her. "I sat up because I wanted to hear about your doings. Why, bless me, it must be fifteen years since I was in London. Did you have a pleasant day, my dear?"

"I enjoyed most of the day very much," said Ruth. "Then I lost Joe, and—"

"You lost Joe?" cried her father sharply.

Then came the sound of hasty, heavy footsteps in the garden, and the door of the house was opened with some violence.

"Yes, or Joe lost me—close to the Houses of Parliament," said Ruth.

On her words the door of the sitting room opened, and the sterling Mr. Joseph Burbage stood on the threshold—he did not take off his hat. His large, round face was red; and he was panting with rage and emotion.

"What's this about your losing Ruth, Joe?" said Banister in a very stern tone.

"Lose her? *Me* lose her? It was she gave me the slip close to the Houses of Parliament—at a few minutes past six—and I've been hunting high and low for her ever since—till the train started, that is."

"But what was she doing?" snapped Banister.

"Ask her! She's the only one as knows—I don't. But if you ask me, I say as she went off with that swell she's just said good-bye to down the road, and she's been gallivanting about with him ever since," cried the sterling young fellow.

"A swell? Down the road?" cried Banister.

"Ay—a swell with a motor car—it's broken down," said Joe.

"Oh, that's a gentleman who's lost his way," said Ruth.

"A swell with a motor car? Oh, I'll swell him!" cried Jacob Banister, and he rushed into the hall, caught up a thick stick and dashed out of the house.

Ruth looked at her panting admirer with blazing, withering eyes.

"Oh, you lout—you country lout!" she said between her clenched teeth.

"Lout—country lout, is it? Well, you know now you can't play tricks on me. You thought you'd get quietly home with this cock and bull story about my losing you, and land me with all the blame. But you don't catch Joe Burbage like that, my lady."

"You *did* lose me, you—you lout!" cried Ruth fiercely.

She ran to the window, drew back the edge of the blind and looked down the road.

"But what is it? What's happened?" asked Mrs. Banister.

"It's all his fault," cried Ruth, without taking her eyes from the blind. "He *did* lose me."

"It looks as if your father was going to be terribly upset," said her grandmother, in a tone which did not sound as if she found the prospect very distressing. After all, life at the farm was dull.

"There's nothing to be upset about; and, anyhow, it's all Joe's fault. Here they come!" said Ruth.

She came quickly from the window and took her stand behind her grandmother's chair as behind a rampart. In her anger she looked prettier than ever. Mr. Joseph Burbage blinked at her reluctantly. She scowled at him.

Daubenay stood, with both hands in the pocket of his motor coat, watching Briggs deftly fitting on the Stepney wheel. It did not for a moment occur to him to offer any help.

Suddenly his left arm was seized in an iron grip, and a fierce voice roared in his ear:

"You come along with me, sir!"

Daubenay twisted round, to find a heavily bearded stranger glaring furiously into his face; he had no difficulty in guessing that it was Ruth's father, though he could not guess how he had been brought so swiftly upon the scene.

"Unhand me, villain!" he said quietly; and he jerked his arm with a strength which Jacob Banister so little expected that his grip was almost shaken off.

He held on, however, and roared:

"You come along with me, or it'll be the worse for you and the worse for her!"

Daubenay's strong impulse was to prove to him definitely that it would not be by any means the worse for him; and Briggs rose from his task balancing a large spanner thoughtfully in his hand.

But the second threat gave Daubenay pause; he could not let Ruth come to harm on his account.

He gave his arm another jerk, which did free it. Then he said:

"What is it you want, exactly, my good man?"

"I want you to come and explain what you've been doing with my daughter! You've got to come—d'you hear? I'm going to have that explanation! I'm going to have it!" panted Jacob Banister.

Plainly, from the point of view of Ruth's welfare, an explanation was best. Daubenay said therefore:

"I don't know what you're making this infernal fuss about. Where do you want me to go?"

"The house—come to the house and explain!" cried the farmer.

"Very good—anything to oblige. Let's go to the house and explain—though goodness knows what you want explaining," said Daubenay carelessly; and he set off briskly toward the house.

The fuming farmer strode along beside him in silence, ushered him into the house and into the sitting room.

Daubenay, refreshed by his drive through the fresh, stimulating air, came into the room looking younger and more debonair than Ruth had dreamed he could look. He kept his face admirably

expressionless, as he looked from Mrs. Banister, leaning forward eagerly in her chair, to Ruth frowning above it, and from her to Mr. Joseph Burbage scowling from the hearthrug. The sterling young fellow had thrust both hands into his trouser pockets and stuck his chin well out in an attitude of manly independence.

Jacob Banister shut the door and set his back against it with a great sigh of relief.

"Now, sir, what's the meaning of this?" he demanded sternly.

"I was coming from the station," Ruth broke in. "This gentleman asked me the way."

"You were coming from the station?" cried the sterling Burbage.

"We were absolutely bunkered—miles from anywhere—at least it seemed so," Daubenay volunteered, in his most agreeable and persuasive tone. "When I saw this lady, I said to my man: 'Saved! Saved!' and we inquired the way to Brixford."

Jacob Banister was just stepping aside from the door, when the sterling Burbage, who had removed his hat to stimulate his wits by scratching his head, cried:

"Don't let him go, Mr. Banister. There's more in this than meets the eye. Why did they shake hands? And why did she wave to him, if they'd only met like that?" He turned to Ruth and said: "Look here: do you mean to tell me you came by the excursion?"

"How else could I get here?" cried Ruth scornfully.

"Well, then, why didn't I see you at Paddington? I must have seen you at Paddington. And look here: who paid your fare? I've got your ticket and all your money. What do you say to that, eh?"

Ruth's eyes filled with tears, and the corners of her lips drooped.

"What's this? What's this?" cried Jacob Banister, plastering himself hard against the door. "You hear what Joe says."

"Joe's a—a b-b-b-beast!" said Ruth; and she began frankly to cry.

"No, no! Tell him what really hap-

pened," she said to Daubenay. "There was no harm in it."

Daubenay looked with admiring eyes at her flushed face and flashing eyes, shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Oh, well, if you insist. But it will only be a waste of time."

"Never mind; tell them," cried Ruth imperiously.

Daubenay turned, wagged an accusing finger at the sterling Burbage, and said acidly:

"This purple numskull is to blame for the whole business."

"You keep a civil tongue in your head!" growled the sterling young fellow.

"The blockhead lost Miss Banister near the Houses of Parliament," Daubenay went on, without heeding him. "Not only lost her there, but took away her ticket and her purse and left her stranded. So I ran her down here in my car."

"Then why did you tell us all those lies—the pair of you?" growled Jacob Banister.

"Because I gathered from Miss Banister that you're such a scandalmongering, evil-thinking lot down here that it wasn't safe to tell the truth—for her sake," said Daubenay in a tone of biting contempt.

"That's all very well—all very well," said Banister. "That's what you tell us. But how long ago was this? How did you meet my daughter?"

"By accident—quite by accident," said Daubenay.

"When was it?"

"Well, I suppose it was about half an hour after I finished breakfast."

"That's a lie!" cried the sterling Burbage. "She didn't get lost till after tea. It was after half past six by Big Ben when I missed her—so there!"

"That's quite likely," said Daubenay, quite unruffled. "But then I don't breakfast till at least two hours after your tea."

"Not till eight o'clock at night?"

"Not till eight o'clock at night," said Daubenay calmly.

Jacob Banister turned on Ruth.

"And what were you doing with your-

self all that time, miss—from half past six to nearly nine?"

"I—I—looked for that stupid Joe for ever so long," said Ruth, with an uncommonly despicable glance at that sterling young fellow. "Then I walked along, looking at the shops. Then I went to call on a friend."

"A friend? You've got a friend in London?" cried her father.

"Yes, a friend of mother's—Mrs. Mulcaster. She used to write to me when I was at school."

"Oh, she did, did she? And he's a friend of hers, I suppose?" growled Jacob Banister.

"Nothing of the kind!" cried Daubenay quickly. "I've never set eyes on the lady in my life. But she used to occupy my flat."

"Yes. And when Mr. Daubenay saw how upset I was at not finding her, he asked me in and did his best to help me out of the mess that silly Joe had got me into," said Ruth.

"You went into this man's rooms at night?" roared her father louder and more furiously than ever.

"Yes—I d-d-did. I had to," stammered Ruth.

"There were plenty of people there—four of them ladies. There's nothing to make a fuss about," said Daubenay calmly.

"How do I know that? How can I know it?" cried Banister.

"I'm sure I don't know, and I don't care. If you're such a fool as to disbelieve your daughter, there's nothing to be said," said Daubenay contemptuously.

"Oh, can't I go to bed? I'm so tired; and this—this is so trying," said Ruth piteously.

"No, you can't! I tell you, I'm going to sift this matter to the bottom!" roared her father.

"Well, it doesn't seem to be any use my staying any longer," said Daubenay, "so I think I'll be bidding you good night, or rather good morning."

"You won't do anything of the kind! You're going to stay here—in this house—whether you like it or not!" roared Jacob Banister.

X

DAUBENAY gazed steadily at Banister. The suggestion of compulsion seemed to have changed his face. The lips, no longer loose and self-indulgent, were firmly set; the pupils of the steady eyes were contracted almost to the size of a pin's head.

He said quietly, in a faintly jeering tone:

"Oh, I'm to stay in this house, whether I like it or not, am I? And who's going to make me? You and this puce-colored dolt?"

"You're going to stay. You decoyed my daughter into your room—and kept her there when respectable folks ought to be in bed. I know your sort. I'm not going to let you go till this business has been settled," roared Jacob Banister.

"But how can it be settled when you won't believe a word either of us says?" cried Daubenay.

"Light will be vouchsafed me," said the farmer in a lower voice, with a kind of growling solemnity.

"But how? And when?" cried Daubenay.

"It may be this very night. It may not be for days," said the farmer with the same growling solemnity.

"It's a shame that Mr. Daubenay should be treated like this—just for being kind and helping me!" cried Ruth, hotly indignant.

"And do you propose that I should stay here till—you get this light?" said Daubenay. He could hardly believe his ears. The proposal seemed to him fantastic to imbecility.

Jacob Banister folded his arms, nodded his head and growled:

"Till I get the light."

"But it's preposterous!" cried Daubenay.

"When he gets like this, the only thing to do is to humor him, sir," said Mrs. Banister in a tone of some hopelessness.

"I dare say. But I'm afraid I haven't the time or the patience for it. I'm going. Good night, Miss Banister; good night, Mrs. Banister. Now, Mr. Banister."

He took two steps toward the door, bent a little forward, with his guard low. He had but five years ago been a clever amateur boxer; and out of training though he was, he had little fear of not giving a good, and a short, account of the farmer and the sterling Burbage.

But instead of rushing at him, Jacob Banister stepped sullenly aside and in a sullen tone said:

"All right. But if you go, the girl goes, too."

Daubenay stopped short.

"What do you mean?" he cried sharply.

"If you go, Ruth goes, too—now. And she never darkens these doors again," growled Banister in inexorable tones.

"Except—"

Daubenay hesitated. There was no doubt that Ruth would be glad to go, that sooner or later she would go; it was inevitable. None the less he could be no party to her going; he must stave off the evil day.

"Very well; I'll stay," he said curtly.

"Good night; and thank you so much, Mr. Daubenay," said Ruth in her sweetest tone as she went upstairs. Of her father and Burbage she took no notice at all.

"Now you, sir, can send away that car; and you can tell your chauffeur to have some clothes sent to you—clothes more fitting for a Christian home than that black and white livery of Satan."

"By Jove! I never thought of that! I haven't got any other clothes," cried Daubenay.

"No other clothes? What do you mean?" cried Jacob Banister.

"I gave them all away. The er—er—well, it was like this—er—er—the fact is, I never wear anything but evening dress; and I've no need of any other kind of clothes," said Daubenay.

The sterling Burbage burst into a rich, deep guffaw.

"Haw, haw! Haw, haw!" he bel-lowed. "If this isn't rich!"

"What? I don't see anything to laugh at. It's—it's depravity," growled Banister.

"But don't you see? He's nothing

but a waiter!" cried the sterling Burbage with the air of a new Columbus.

"A waiter!" said Jacob Banister doubtfully.

"Yes, a dirty waiter. It's only waiters as wear evening dress in the day-time."

It flashed on Daubenay that he and Ruth might profit by this mistake. He said fiercely:

"What's the matter with being a waiter? It's a perfectly respectable calling."

"Yes—oh, yes. Lord, shan't I have the laugh on Ruth? Haw, haw! Haw, haw!" bellowed the sterling Burbage. "She and her fine gentleman! Haw, haw! Haw, haw!"

"There are waiters and waiters, let me tell you!" cried Daubenay, with a happy, angry simulation of wounded vanity.

"Then you're a foreigner," said Jacob Banister darkly.

"No, I'm not. I'm an Englishman. It takes an Englishman to get to the head of the profession. The best head-waiters are always Englishmen," said Daubenay falsely, but with a proud air.

"Do you mean to tell me that a waiter can afford a motor car?" said Banister in a tone of utter disbelief.

"Have you any notion of what a head-waiter's tips in a big restaurant are? What do you say to from five to eight pounds a night?" said Daubenay, speaking at a venture.

"Five to eight pounds a night!" said the sterling Burbage in a tone of awe.

"That's all very well. But why weren't you at your work this evening?" said Jacob Banister in a tone of fresh suspicion.

"My holiday—my annual holiday," said Daubenay readily. "It's a wearing life—a very wearing life—so waiters generally spend the first few days of their holiday in bed. That's why I hadn't long finished breakfast when Miss Banister came."

Jacob Banister and the sterling Burbage gazed at one another doubtfully.

Daubenay saw that they were shaken; and he made haste to press his advantage.

"I hope I've succeeded in setting your

mind at rest, Mr. Banister," he said in a cheerful, reassuring tone. "Of course your anxiety does you great credit. But you can see now how groundless it was."

He took a couple of careless, tentative steps toward the door.

Jacob Banister gazed at him doubtfully. The sterling Burbage scratched his head.

"I won't say you're telling me a lie, Mr. Daubenay," said Jacob Banister, hesitating.

"No, don't," said Daubenay lightly.

"But I must ask you to stay a few days, all the same."

Daubenay's face fell.

"What you've just told me may make things better, or it may not. But at present I can't see my way. We must wait for the light," said the farmer heavily.

"Oh, must we?" said Daubenay in a cheerless tone. "Well, if you really mean what you say, I suppose I can't clear out till you're absolutely satisfied that there's nothing in the world between me and Miss Banister. It wouldn't be fair to her, if I did. But about clothes—"

"I'll lend you what you want. There are some spare overalls you can have to work in," said the farmer.

"To *what* in?" cried Daubenay, aghast.

"To work in. Everyone works here. Those who don't work don't eat; that's the motto of this house," said Jacob Banister proudly.

"Work?" said Daubenay.

"You wouldn't want to be idling about all the time, would you?" said the farmer in a fresh glow of suspicion.

"You have to work in London, you say," said the sterling Burbage.

"But I'm having my annual holiday, I tell you," protested Daubenay.

"There's no holiday like a change of work," said Banister sententiously. "I shan't expect much from you at first," he added in an indulgent tone.

"No, don't—don't," said Daubenay quickly.

He stopped short, frowning. It seemed to him that wherever he went the

world at once flung itself into a conspiracy to rob him of his ease.

Plainly, however, there was nothing to be done. He shrugged his shoulders and said gloomily:

"Well, I'll go along to my chauffeur and tell him that I've accepted your kind invitation to spend a few days with you, and send him off."

"Very well," said the farmer.

"I'll go with you. It's on my way home," said Burbage.

Daubenay gave him an ugly look. Already he had taken the strongest dislike to the sterling young fellow.

XI

BANISTER led his guest upstairs and ushered him into a bedroom of a fair size but with a somewhat low ceiling. He bade him good night, shut the door and turned the key. This last precaution annoyed Daubenay. It seemed to him excessive.

However, the fresh night breeze, laden with the fragrance of the flowers in the garden beneath, blowing gently in through the window, soothed him. He lighted a cigar, sat down before the window, set his arms on the ledge and leaned out, enjoying the night.

Presently he began to whistle a haunting melody from the London Pavilion. He had come to the end of it and was beginning it again, when he heard the sash of a window further along the front of the house raised gently. He saw dimly a head thrust out and Ruth said, in a very low, soft voice:

"Are you quite comfortable? Have you everything you want?"

"Oh, everything—thanks," he said in a voice as low.

"I think it's perfectly disgraceful of my father to keep you here like this!" she said hotly. "It was awfully good of you to stay on my account."

"Not a bit of it. What use would it have been my bringing you all the way home from London, if you were turned out as soon as you got here? Labor and tire wear and petrol wasted."

"What did you tell father after I'd gone?" she asked.

"Oh, I told him a good deal. He gathered that I was a waiter."

"A waiter!" cried Ruth.

"Yes, he caught me out—suggested that I should send for my day clothes."

"Well, couldn't you?"

"Of course I couldn't. I haven't got any day clothes. What does a Night Hawk want with day clothes?"

"I was forgetting," said Ruth.

"Then of course your scarlet imbecile tumbled to it that I was a waiter. Then I think I rose in your father's estimation; respectable, hard-working profession and all that, don't you know?"

"Yes, father would prefer a waiter," said Ruth.

The heavens were now growing quickly light. At first he had only seen her face as a faint gray blur on the darkness. Now he could see its oval enframed in her soft dark hair. He wished that it would grow light enough to see her eyes. Then she smothered a little yawn.

"Oh, I say, I oughtn't to be keeping you up like this," he said quickly. "I was forgetting that I was a whole day's rest ahead of you. Off you go to bed."

"I suppose I'd better," she said reluctantly. "Good night."

"Good night," he said gently. "Sleep hard."

She drew in her head, threw off her dressing gown, slipped into bed; and in about three minutes she was sleeping hard.

XII

DAUBENAY was awakened by Jacob Banister bellowing at him. He raised himself slowly on his elbow, drew his watch from under his pillow, and found that it was only twenty minutes to five.

"What's this? What do you mean by waking me at this hour? You said last night that everybody got up at five!" he suddenly roared at the top of his really powerful voice.

Jacob Banister stepped back from the bed hastily, startled by this sudden vehemence.

"You—we're down by five," he said.

"You told me we got up at five! I

won't have this inaccuracy! It's as bad as lying!" bellowed Daubenay, in tones which roared and echoed through the house.

Daubenay once more laid his head on his pillow and let himself drowse. Ten minutes later a horrible jangling clock struck five.

His watch assured him that it still lacked ten minutes of that hour. He sprang out of bed, dashed to his door, opened it and bellowed loudly into the echoing house:

"That clock's an impostor and a cheat! This is a house of gross deception!"

At five o'clock he rose and called loudly for a bath. In about three minutes a startled, rosy-cheeked maid brought one up to him. At half past five he came leisurely down to the kitchen in the unstained evening dress of an English gentleman.

Jacob Banister, who was already half an hour late getting forth to direct the work of the farm, was not far from being black in the face with suppressed fury.

"Look here, will you just hurry up?" he growled in a tone of bearish fury. "I've got my work to do; and I want to set you yours before I start out."

"Oh, that's all right. Don't bother about me. I'll make myself useful about the house. Mrs. Banister will find something for me to do—clean the silver—or—or—polish the dining-room table," said Daubenay with airy amiability.

"I'm—I'm—she won't! Nothing of the kind! I won't have you messing about the house! There's plenty for you to do outside!" stormed his furious host.

"Yours is a suspicious nature, Banister," said Daubenay. "I'm glad I'm not cursed with it. I don't care a rap where I work. But you've discovered that I'm a waiter; and a waiter is much more useful in a house than out of it."

"What you'll do is honest work and plenty of it," growled his host.

"Shall I now—I wonder?" said Daubenay doubtfully, considering. Then his face brightened, and he said cheerfully: "Whatever I do will be done thoroughly. You can make up your

mind to that. My thoroughness will surprise you."

"I don't doubt it," said the farmer drily. "How much more are you going to eat?"

"Ah, the old-fashioned English hospitality!" said Daubenay, taking another large slice of bread and butter from the plate.

Jacob Banister turned sharply away, went to the window and stared out with his hands thrust deep into his pockets. Daubenay finished his meal leisurely, talking to the flushed Ruth about the necessity of lots of sleep for growing girls.

When at last he rose, the farmer bade him come along, and led the way hastily out of the house to the harness room.

"There," he said, in a tone of gloomy triumph. "There's your work and plenty of it."

Daubenay rubbed his hands together and said in his most cheerful tone:

"Years and years of work."

Jacob Banister looked at him queerly, and said sourly:

"I don't know about that."

"Then you don't know what thoroughness is," said Daubenay with conviction. Banister frowned.

Daubenay walked slowly round the room and looked earnestly at each set as he passed it. Then he said:

"Why, there's a year's work in the steel alone; the rust has bitten into it."

Jacob Banister shuffled his feet uneasily and growled:

"Well, you'd better make a start. I've got plenty else to see to."

"Right you are," said Daubenay cheerfully. "I'll get my gloves and borrow an apron from Mrs. Banister."

"Gloves! Gloves! We don't use gloves here! We work with the hands God gave us!" cried Jacob Banister scornfully.

"Yes, they look like it," said Daubenay drily.

"This is the horny hand of honest toil," said Jacob Banister, stormily thrusting out a large red hand for his guest's inspection.

"Nonsense," said Daubenay, quite unimpressed. "It isn't horny from

work. It's just hard for want of proper washing."

In the most leisurely fashion Daubenay sauntered back into the house, found a pair of dogskin gloves in his motor coat, and obtained an apron from Mrs. Banister. He returned as leisurely to the harness room, and at once enjoyed a happy thought. At some time in the course of the day there would surely be work for carts and wagons. He set to work to reduce every set of harness to its smallest component parts. He felt that it would be some repayment of the hospitality Jacob Banister had forced on him. With this noble end in view, he worked with such *verve* and such assiduity that he had taken every set of harness to pieces in little more than two hours.

XIII

DAUBENAY went over to Brixport next morning to get some suitable clothes to wear about the farm.

As he returned, and opened the garden gate, the sterling young Burbage came out of the front door. His face was gloomy, and it was plain that, for him at any rate, all was not well with the world. That made it all the more heartless of Daubenay to walk down the garden path as if he were the only living person on it. He did not see the sterling young fellow, or his florid round face, or the fine fancy vest he was wearing; he did not even hear the greeting he growled.

It was but natural that the sterling young fellow's red face should grow yet redder. This insolent behavior of an undesirable interloper from suspect London was by way of being a last straw, for he had just come from an uncommonly freezing and spiteful Ruth. He had in vain striven to persuade her that what she called his sneaking the night before, or rather early that morning, had been brought about solely to promote her best interests. She preferred to consider it the natural expression of a mean, malicious, vile and utterly contemptible nature; and he could not persuade her to take any other view of it.

He was so taken aback by the inso-

lence of the undesirable interloper that he merely opened his mouth and walked on with it open to the garden gate. There he recovered himself sufficiently to bawl loudly at Daubenay's inexpressive back:

"Waiter! Garson! Dirty waiter!"

The words had no appreciable effect on the interloper's insensible back; he went into the house and shut the door.

The sterling young fellow, at last inflamed to the limit, dashed down the garden path, opened the front door and yelled:

"Dirty wait—"

It was Daubenay who cut him short. He was just inside the door, hanging up his hat; and when he saw a large, red ear within twelve inches of his itching knuckles he planted a short, stiff jab on it, which rattled every bone in the sterling young head to which it was attached, and drove the other ear hard and painfully against the doorpost.

The sterling young Burbage withdrew his head from the house far more quickly than he had inserted it. But his mind was at the moment so intent on his stinging ears that he still held on to the doorpost. That was how it came about that Daubenay shut the door on his fingers.

He was nearly sure that he heard the sterling young fellow yell; but he certainly did not see him dancing some obscure version of the tango in a bed of red geraniums, rubbing his right ear and waving his left hand in the air, to an accompaniment of language which would have deeply shocked the father-in-law he so earnestly desired—there were two inches of stout oak door between them.

Daubenay went briskly to the parlor, drawn to it by the pleasing sound of clicking knives and forks, and by a most agreeable fragrance of roast meat. He found the family seated at table, just beginning the meal.

Banister carved him a generous plateful of the roast beef. He might grudge his guest belief, but he certainly did not grudge him food. Mrs. Banister helped him generously to beans and potatoes.

He had not eaten more than three mouthfuls, however, when the door was

opened with some violence, and the sterling young Burbage stood on the threshold. They had scarcely time to raise their eyes to him, when he cried:

"He assaulted me! He hit me on the head! I'll have the lor of him!"

"Why did you assault him, Mr. Banister?" said Daubenay with quick interest. "I thought that he was a pet of yours."

"Me assault—" said Jacob Banister in a tone of surprise.

"It wasn't him—it was you! And well you know it!" roared the sterling Burbage.

"No, Mr. Banister never assaulted me," said Daubenay firmly.

"It was *you* as assaulted *me*!" bawled the empurpled Burbage.

Daubenay shook his head and said calmly and coldly:

"There must be some mistake. If I'd assaulted you, both your eyes would be black, your nose would be bleeding and so would your lips; and you'd be at least three front teeth short. You don't know what you're talking about."

"It's a lie! You know it's a lie! You hit me on the head!" bellowed the sterling, but exasperated, Burbage.

"No one but a fool would hit you on the head. It's so thick that it would have no effect," said Daubenay.

The sterling Burbage ground his large teeth at him.

"I'll have the lor of you! I'm off to the police station at West Brenton straight!" he bellowed, and was gone.

Daubenay apologized for the sterling young fellow's bursting in upon their meal so noisily under a false impression, and went quietly on with his meal, striving to get his air as near saintliness as possible.

"He'll summons you," said Jacob Banister, not without a touch of satisfaction in his tone.

"If Joe summons Mr. Daubenay, he'll have to go before the bench; and it will go hard with him. None of the magistrates like you, Jacob," said Mrs. Banister mournfully.

"No, they don't. I've dealt faithfully with all of them—sons of Belial that they are!—at one time or another,"

said Banister in a tone of gloomy satisfaction.

"I don't think it will go hard with me," said Daubenay, in a tone quite free from anxiety. "However much the bench may dislike you, they'll want something in the way of evidence beyond the unsupported word of your pet purple nincompoop."

"Would you perjure yourself, man?" said the farmer in a tone of sepulchral solemnity.

"Certainly not. I should merely refuse to admit the truth of your pet purple nincompoop's statements. My attitude would be purely legal—not moral."

Jacob Banister gazed at him in considerable perplexity and scratched his head.

In the meantime the sterling young Burbage was so full of righteous indignation that, heedless of the protests of his empty stomach, he went off hot-foot and dinnerless to West Brenton to start legal proceedings against the detestable interloper. Unfortunately for his purpose, he was not popular in the neighborhood generally, and he was in particular unpopular with the police sergeant of West Brenton. That worthy was further annoyed by being withdrawn from his hot dinner. He listened therefore to the woeful tale of the sterling Burbage with unsympathetic ears; and when he came to the end of it, he asked, with absolute brusqueness, what evidence of the assault he could adduce.

The sterling Burbage was taken aback, but protested that his word was evidence enough. Still unsympathetic, the sergeant took quite another view of his word, and assured him that the bench would take the same view as himself.

The sterling Burbage uttered several reflections on the intelligence and veracity of the sergeant. The sergeant's answer was to retire to his kitchen and his dinner in flushed, but silent, scorn.

XIV

THE latter half of the Banister dinner was eaten in peace. As they rose at the end of it, Daubenay drew his cigar case

from his pocket and with a splendid air said nobly:

"And now for work—honest work."

Jacob Banister looked at him with far from hopeful eyes. Already he distrusted this soft-handed Londoner. His two hours' work in the morning had provided his chief carter with quite unnecessary work for the next two days. "You might make yourself useful in the flower garden. You can't do much harm there," he said finally.

"The very thing," said Daubenay cheerfully.

The farmer took him to the tool shed, found him a hoe and a pair of pruning shears, and showed him the paths which needed weeding and the plants he might prune. Then he went briskly off to deal with the farm work.

Daubenay took off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves and hoed a square foot of the path with careful thoroughness. Then he lighted a cigar and sauntered to the open window of the parlor, where, as he had expected, he found Ruth engaged in some dressmaking operation which furrowed her brow with anxious care.

"Behold the toiler!" he said.

"You mean me, I suppose," said Ruth, smiling at him.

"You don't call that toil!" said Daubenay scornfully. "Niggling about with a pair of scissors and a needle. I'm weeding—with a hoe."

"How much have you done?" she asked quickly.

"A good foot," he said proudly. "Now I'm going to do some pruning. I can prune and smoke, too."

"You don't call pruning work!" said Ruth, smothering a little yawn.

"There you are: you ought to be taking a siesta," said Daubenay. "You had about three hours' sleep last night. I tell you what: if you'll go and lie down, like a good little girl, I'll take you for a motor ride at five o'clock. I'm expecting my car, to bring me some things."

"Oh, it would be nice!" cried Ruth.

"Very good. Off you go to that siesta!"

Ruth gathered her things together obediently and went upstairs. Daube-

nay pruned gently till he came to the end of his cigar, hoed another two feet of the path, and then betook himself to a hammock slung between two trees in the corner of the garden, which had been summoning him in a very alluring fashion for some time, climbed into it, and fell into a profound and refreshing slumber.

He had been sleeping for half an hour when Jacob Banister came into the garden and looked round it. Presently his keen eye discovered the sleeping toiler. He shook his head glumly, and then looked sharply up at the sky as if he were looking with some impatience for the light he was expecting. Then he went away. He felt that as long as Daubenay was asleep he was harmless.

Half an hour later Daubenay was awakened by the honk of a motor horn, and two minutes later Briggs arrived in the car. Daubenay took from him the kitbag in which Pelly had packed his boots and cigars, and bade him go a quarter of a mile up the road and wait. Then he carried the kitbag up to his room, and waited till Ruth, who had also been awakened by the motor horn, was ready.

He told her where she would find the car, and then went briskly off to it, leaving her to follow, since they were agreed that, harmless as was the expedition they had in view, it would make for peace if they were not seen leaving the farm together.

He drove the car himself, and made a circular tour of about twenty-five miles, getting back to the farm in time for the six o'clock tea. She enjoyed the drive immensely.

She arrived at the farm five minutes before Daubenay, to find the sterling Burbage awaiting her in a fuming impatience. He had seen the car pass through the village, had recognized it, and had presently perceived the possibility of Daubenay's taking Ruth for a drive. He had reached the farm to find that both of them had gone out.

He had had a good three-quarters of an hour to fume in; and when Ruth did arrive, there was considerable asperity in the tone in which he curtly asked:

"Where have you been?"

"Out," said Ruth succinctly, walking past him to the stairs.

"I know that! But where?" he cried angrily.

Ruth went slowly and in silence to the top of the flight of stairs; then she turned and said in coldly scornful accents:

"Mind your own business—purple nincompoop!"

The sterling Burbage danced on the mat at the bottom of the stairs.

Daubenay arrived some five minutes later, wearing a cheerful and quite unembarrassed air. He did not come into the house, but took off his coat and began to hoe the garden path. Apparently he did not see the sterling Burbage, who stood glowering at him from the threshold of the front door, as he waited to make his protest against the motor drive, or, as Ruth would have preferred to put it, to sneak to Jacob Banister.

After a while the sterling young fellow found that he could not bear to be ignored by the interloper; after all, he was much the bigger man, and he walked slowly down the path to within six feet of him and stood watching him with a very supercilious air.

He said nothing, and Daubenay said nothing. Daubenay found the silence quite endurable; indeed, he preferred it. But the sterling Burbage could not endure it; he had presently to say in a jeering tone:

"Doing a little honest work at last?"

Daubenay looked at him and said blandly:

"Is your ear feeling very thick?"

The sterling young fellow grunted.

"You look as if nature had intended you to have a perpetually thick ear. I must try to help her carry out her intentions," said Daubenay still more blandly.

The sterling Burbage swallowed jerkily; then he said fiercely:

"You'd better be careful, my fine fellow! If once you get my blood up, you'll be sorry for it as long as you live."

Daubenay at the moment had his eye fixed on the left boot of the sterling young fellow; he suspected him of pos-

sessing a corn on the little toe. As he edged nearer he said contemptuously:

"Well, I got a good lot of your blood up as high as your ear. But nothing happened."

"Ah, I've not done with that! Don't you think it! I'm going to have the lor of you, I am. I'm not going to be knocked about by a dirty London waiter for nothing!"

Daubenay measured his distance with a nice eye, and said:

"And what are you going to do about this, you silly young sneak?"

With that he struck smartly with his hoe that part of the sterling Burbage's left boot which he suspected of harboring a corn.

Apparently his suspicion was well grounded, for the sterling young fellow leapt into the air with a howl, and then danced on the lawn, accompanying the effort with a furious outburst from the most violent part of his vocabulary.

Ruth, who had had an eye on them from her bedroom window, smiled joyfully upon the performer, but Jacob Banister, coming through the garden gate, scowled at Daubenay and growled:

"What have you been doing now?"

"Hoeing corn," said Daubenay cheerfully. "I got a little tired of hoeing weeds, so I hoed your pet purple nincompoop's pet corn."

He laughed merrily at his own jest, and even the stern face of Jacob Banister relaxed to the shadow of a grin.

"I can't see what you two want to quarrel about," he growled.

"I'm not quarreling," said Daubenay in his most amiable tone. "I'm only trying to teach your pet purple nincompoop not to be a dirty sneak."

"He only did his duty," said Jacob Banister sternly.

"Rot! You didn't do your duty like that when you were his age," said Daubenay in a scoffing tone.

"Ah, I hadn't got the light then!" said the farmer quickly.

"He's been taking Ruth out in his motor car—I know he has!" cried the sterling young fellow.

"Did you ever know anyone so hard to teach, Mr. Banister?" said Daubenay

in a tone of some exasperation. "He doesn't know anything of the kind; and if he did, he's no business to say anything about it."

"He does his duty to me and the girl," said Jacob Banister with a kind of prim glumness.

"Oh, rats! Let's see if it's any easier to teach him to dance," said Daubenay.

He leapt lightly forward and with the hoe rapped smartly the little toe of the sterling Burbage's left boot. He was more than rewarded for his pains: his pupil leapt and howled, and as he came down Daubenay rapped the toe of his right boot with no less gratifying results. On his second descent to earth the sterling young fellow made a rush at him, but pressed his stomach so hard against the head of the hoe, which Daubenay was holding stiffly out in front of him, that he doubled up, gasping heavily. Daubenay, who seemed to handle the hoe as most men handle a light cane, beat a tattoo on the sterling one's boots and soon got him dancing again. There is no saying how long he would have danced had not the farmer caught Daubenay's arm and bade him desist.

Daubenay shook the farmer's restraining grip roughly off; but he said amiably enough:

"Well, I'll stop the lesson—to oblige you, Mr. Banister."

Almost blubbing, the sterling Burbage made haste out of the garden; then he stopped and proceeded, still dancing gently, to abuse and threaten Daubenay, who laughed at him with the most cheerful unconcern.

Then Ruth came to the front door and called them in to tea.

The sterling Burbage, with uncommon asperity, refused the farmer's invitation to join them, and assured him that until that dirty waiter had left the house he would not set foot in it.

"Then when I want to give you another lesson I shall have to come and find you," said Daubenay, walking toward the door.

Jacob Banister followed him; and as they came to the door, he said in a tone of deep suspicion:

"You're an uncommonly active man for a London waiter."

"Well, if you had to run for your life, balancing nine loaded plates on the top of one another, you'd be an active man," said Daubenay.

XV

It seemed somewhat odd to Daubenay that he should be eating a heavy meal at six in the evening with a hearty appetite. But, after all, he had had nothing to eat or drink, neither afternoon tea, nor whiskey and soda, since their midday dinner. He did not repine; he was indeed grateful. After tea Banister again went out to superintend the work of the farm; and Ruth and Mrs. Banister brought their work out into the garden where Daubenay was again toying with the hoe. He leaned upon it and talked to them as they worked.

After a while Mrs. Banister professed that she found the evening chilly and went indoors, leaving them together.

In that twilight hour they made a considerable approach to intimacy; and both of them were sharply annoyed when Mrs. Banister called to Ruth from her bedroom window to come in. But three minutes afterward Jacob Banister returned; and Daubenay wondered whether his mother had watched for his coming.

As he came through the garden gate, he said to him cheerfully:

"Any light yet, Mr. Banister?"

"Time enough—time enough. It will come in good time," said the farmer, with a real solemnity which rather impressed Daubenay.

There was yet another surprise in store for Daubenay: when the household retired to bed at the astounding hour of nine o'clock, he found himself quite ready to retire, too, and was fast asleep by a quarter past. But he had very little difficulty in getting up at five next morning.

The next day and the days that followed were very like the first day—except that they were not so frequently bespangled by the bright visits of the sterling Burbage, who found it extraor-

dinarily difficult to be in the society of Daubenay for two minutes without appearing in some ridiculous light—for the most part before the eyes of Ruth.

Daubenay's dislike of the hulking young lout grew stronger as he grew more intimate with Ruth. He disliked him quite enough for having got them into trouble by his tale bearing; and he was coming to dislike him yet more for the prospect that he would in the end marry Ruth. He could not see any other fate for her at East Brenton; and the more he saw of her the more clearly he realized that she was far too good for the young sneak.

Once or twice he thought idly of rescuing her. But the picture of himself as the husband of a pretty, unsophisticated country girl like Ruth presented itself to him as supremely ridiculous.

That did not prevent him from flirting with her with considerable emphasis; but he contrived the while to make it clear to her that it was flirtation and not serious. "If there were times when she wished that he was in earnest, she did not let it trouble her, but took the good the gods did send her gaily and with a light heart."

So the days passed. At the end of a week Daubenay was nearly half a stone heavier; his face was tanned; his eyes were clear; and he looked as little like a Night Hawk as Scudamore had looked on his return from Canada. He had, too, lost his impatience to return to the night life.

There was a shower after tea one night; but instead of going back into the house Ruth led Daubenay to an old thatched arbor at the end of the kitchen garden. He was so pleased with it that on the following evenings they went straight to it. Their talk fell, idly enough, on marriage.

"I never know when I'm going to be seized and married," said Daubenay ruefully. "It might happen to me at any moment."

"What *do* you mean?" cried Ruth.

"Why, I've got an aunt and a cousin—tremendously energetic, active people—and both of them are set on my marrying my cousin."

"And don't you want to?" said Ruth in a rather faint voice. The sudden prospect of Daubenay's marrying filled her with a curious, very uneasy disquiet, somewhat daunting.

"I do not," said Daubenay with extreme sincerity. "She'd set about making a man of me—or something infernally unpleasant. And my ideal is to be let alone to go my own quiet way."

"But how can she marry you if you don't want to marry her?" said Ruth in some bewilderment.

"I don't know. It's so much easier for a woman to say 'No' than for a man. At any rate, I've been engaged to her twice."

"And are you engaged to her now?"

"No. Thank goodness!" said Daubenay with real fervor.

There was a pause; then Ruth asked:

"What's her name?"

"Mrs. Constantine."

"Oh, she's a widow, is she? That explains a lot. But—but—can't you really resist?"

"Not a determined woman—I really can't. I don't know why. I find it easy enough to resist a determined man."

"Perhaps after staying down here you'll be feeling stronger," said Ruth hopefully.

"I shall. But I doubt that I shall feel stronger enough to cope with Cynthia backed up by my Aunt Mary," said Daubenay, with a lack of hopefulness in his tone.

"Cynthia—that's a pretty name," said Ruth quickly, with a faint touch of jealousy in her tone. "Is she pretty?"

"I don't know—I never thought about it. I suppose she is. But what she is really is smart; and you can't think how smartness bores me."

"But the Night Hawks—aren't they smart?" asked Ruth quickly. "Madame Leonille said they were."

"Oh, that's different—quite different. It's all right their being smart. But Mrs. Constantine's different. She began by being a lady. They didn't."

Ruth gazed at him with a puzzled air. Then she said:

"Would it be all right for me to be smart?"

"Certainly not!" cried Daubenay with the firmest decision. "You begin by being a nice girl; and you must remain that." Under a sudden impulse he leaned forward and kissed her.

She did not thrust him away or protest; she only sighed.

XVI

RUTH was a long time falling asleep that night. The kiss had disturbed her beyond measure. She had not examined her feeling for Daubenay; she had rather shrunk from examining it. At the time she had attached but little importance to the kiss, for she was so sure that he was not in earnest, so sure that it was but an incident in a pleasant, idle flirtation. But it had clung to her mind, troubling her; and suddenly she found that it had, as it were, crystallized her feeling for him, and that it was a far deeper, more serious feeling than she had let herself know.

There was no doubt about it: during the days he had been at the farm his engaging personality had been making its appeal to her with a growing attraction. It was natural enough that she should have never known anyone like him; but more than that she had never dreamed that there was anyone like him, always at his ease, debonair, light-hearted, sure of himself, always courteous, ready to be interested in others; in that gloomy house he was like—like sunshine—like—yes, like life itself. And he looked so different—so very different from the men of East Brenton and also from the men of Rouen.

But what was the use of her knowing him so well? She thought bitterly of the gulf between them. It did seem hard and so unfair. . . . He would no more dream of marrying her than he would dream of marrying one of the Night Hawks. . . . That kiss—it had troubled and disturbed her badly enough; but it had been just a trifle to him—the kind of kiss he might have given a pretty child.

When Daubenay came down to his five o'clock tea that morning, the color

deepened in her face as she greeted him. His quick eye marked the signal of danger; and he told himself that he must pull up and go slowly. It would indeed be idiotic to accept the enforced hospitality of Jacob Banister for the child's sake, and then to leave her miserable when he went away. He was disposed to consider her much more of a child than she really was, because there was so very little of the child in the women he knew.

Accordingly he changed his attitude toward her a little. He could not very well bring their flirtation to an abrupt end—it would have been to proclaim himself exceedingly conceited—but he teased her a good deal more, and was tender with her a good deal less. But he could not always be strong—she was too pretty—and sometimes he was more tender with her than he thought wise. It is to be feared, too, that more than once he weakened to the point of kissing her again. They were, indeed, careless, laughing kisses, but they were kisses.

It was also unfortunate that he was growing more and more attractive to the womanly eye. The aggressively healthy life he was leading had not only browned his skin and cleared his eye; it had also robbed him of his somewhat languid appearance and invested him with an air of alert virility. Ruth at any rate found him far more attractive.

He found the attitude of Jacob Banister somewhat puzzling. He was quite sure that he knew how much of his time was spent with Ruth; more than once he caught the sterling Burbage spying on them, and it was certain that he carried reports to the farmer. Daubenay wondered whether his host, having made up his mind that he was indeed a waiter, was deliberately allowing him to pay his addresses to Ruth, or whether he was just leaving things alone till that light for which he was waiting was vouchsafed to him.

Often he asked him lightly enough if he had yet received that light; but sometimes he speculated with some anxiety about what the result would be if that light made it clear that he was no waiter

but that most hateful, to his host, of human beings, a man-about-town.

One evening he asked Ruth.

"I really don't know," she said. "Most likely he would flare up, and I should catch it. He might run a line through my name in the family Bible, as he did to mother's, and turn me out."

The next time he found himself alone with Mrs. Banister, he asked:

"How long has Ruth's mother been dead?"

Mrs. Banister gave him a startled glance and hesitated; then she said:

"I don't rightly know."

"I suppose she *is* dead?" said Daubenay.

"I don't rightly know," she said, after again hesitating.

"I see," said Daubenay. "It's a family secret. Ruth has been kept in ignorance of it."

"Yes—yes—in a kind of way," she said uneasily.

"It's no business of mine, of course," said Daubenay in his most careless and agreeable tone. "But I'm interested in you all, and it struck me as strange that Mr. Banister should be so set against men-about-town."

Mrs. Banister started. Then she said quickly:

"Oh, you've been putting two and two together, have you, sir? Oh, well, it's easy enough. Ruth's mother was one of the quality, though she was the daughter of the old parson; and I begged and begged Jacob not to marry her, for she was friends with the quality, and it never does—never. But he was that masterful in those days there was no stopping him; and he mastered her as he mastered all of us. I never believed that she rightly cared for him; it was just his masterfulness as did it. They married in haste and repented at leisure."

"That's always a pity," said Daubenay in a sympathetic tone, as she paused.

"Not a month's happiness did they get out of it—not real happiness. Jacob would go on being masterful, though I warned him, for she had a spirit of her own, too. And it was a cat and dog's

life they led. And then the Colonel came back from India—the youngest colonel in the army, they said. And he'd spent all his school holidays at the rectory, and they'd been boy and girl together. And I warned Jacob to be kind to her, but he was never one to heed a warning. And the Colonel wasn't the man to let her go on being unhappy if he could stop it; and in the end he had his way and carried her off. Who could wonder?"

"What became of her?" said Daubenay.

"The Colonel died a few months afterward—of pneumonia. He'd been wounded four times. And she was living in London. But we haven't heard anything of her for years. It's likely that she's been dead a long time. London kills people."

XVII

DAUBENAY was exceedingly interested in Mrs. Banister's story of her son's unfortunate marriage; it threw a bright light on the farmer's morose disposition and on his attitude to Ruth's getting lost in London. Also it made it plain how Mrs. Mulcaster, of whose manners even the easy-going Night Hawks disapproved, had come to be a friend of Ruth's mother and interested in Ruth herself.

It did not make him any easier in mind about Ruth. In a place like East Brenton life would not be made any the smoother for her, if that were her mother's story. Doubtless the sterling Burbage knew it; and if she married him, he was exactly the kind of sneaking hound to be forever twitting her with it. Daubenay grew yet sorrier for her. It was a great pity and a great waste that she should marry the beastly bumpkin at all; to marry him with this handicap made it far worse. Yet Daubenay could not see how he could help in the matter; he cudged his brains to find some way out of East Brenton for her, some employment which would suit her and provide her with a respectable and comfortable livelihood; but his path had not lain in the direction of such em-

ploymments. He certainly could not see her in the hat shop of Madame Leonille. It might be just a little better than marriage with the sterling Burbage; but he could not bring himself to be the agent to bring her into that coarsening sphere.

Consequently when, a few mornings later, she told him joyfully that she had had a letter from Mrs. Mulcaster and now knew her address, he was less annoyed than he would have been before the full difficulty of her position had been revealed to him. To a girl in her awkward case the friendship of even a Mrs. Mulcaster might prove useful.

None the less, he said gravely:

"Mrs. Mulcaster isn't a particularly good kind of friend for a pretty girl like you. She isn't, really."

"Yes, I gathered from what your friends said about her that there was something wrong," said Ruth slowly. "But beggars mustn't be choosers. I've so few friends."

"Didn't your mother have any money? Did she leave you any?" asked Daubenay quickly.

"Oh, yes; but it doesn't come to me till I'm of age, or till I get married. So it's no use at all. Joe told me one day that it was a 'tidy bit.' I think that's really why he wants to marry me. But I'm never going to marry him!" cried Ruth.

"But as far as I can see he's the only man about here for you to marry. Your father seems to have quarreled with everybody else," said Daubenay.

East Brenton was now in its annual simmer, for the time had come for the three days' fair, the old-time Statutes Hiring Fair, which its inhabitants call the Statiss. Even Ruth and Daubenay were affected by the excitement which filled the maids and the farmhands and which roused Mrs. Banister to tell many stories of the old-time glories of the fair.

Ruth was as full of joyful expectation as a child, for after all the only break in the monotony of life at the Banister farm, before the coming of Daubenay, had been her somewhat unfortunate visit to London; and the only break in the year before she came to England had been the fair at Rouen, a finer and gayer

fair than that of East Brenton but still very like it.

Daubenay was looking forward to seeing her enjoy herself with almost as pleasant an expectancy as hers. It seemed to him that the mere anticipation of pleasure brightened her eyes, and certainly it kept charming smiles playing about her lips. Also it seemed to him pathetic that so poor a pleasure as this wretched fair should excite in her this great delight; and it set him longing keenly to take her away from this stupid life and give her a really good time.

The fair, or at any rate the fun of the fair, did not begin till the afternoon. In the morning Daubenay was clipping, leisurely, the hedge of yew and privet which enclosed the kitchen garden; Ruth was putting the last touches to the hat she was going to wear at the fair.

Of a sudden a figure darkened the open windows; she looked up with a quick smile, expecting to see Daubenay leaning on the sill; but her eyes fell on the rich round face of the sterling Burbage. The speed with which the smile smoothed out of her face was amazing.

"Morning," said the sterling young fellow with an ingratiating air. "I just came round to remind you that you're going to the fair with me this afternoon."

"Am I?" answered Ruth in the tone and with the air of one receiving undreamed-of news.

"Of course you are. We fixed it up weeks ago—before we went to London," he said with some heat.

"Well, it's off. I'm not going to a fair with a horrid sneak," said Ruth in a tone of great firmness.

The sterling Burbage ground his large teeth.

"Sneak!" he said thickly. "I only told your father for your good. It was my duty. A likely thing I was going to have the girl I'm going to marry traipsing about the country with a feller from London half the night and nothing said!"

"I'm not the girl you're going to marry. I wouldn't marry a sneak if he

were the last red-faced man in the world," said Ruth.

The rich round face of the sterling young fellow grew yet redder; and he cried: "I know what it really is! It's that waiter feller! Well, I'm not going to stand it, and you needn't think I am. I'm going to ask your father straight whether you're to go to the show with me or with this waiter feller; and what he says you'll abide by."

The sterling young fellow ground his large teeth at her, turned on his heel and went heavily out of the garden. He tried to make up his mind to defy Daubenay and obtain an injunction from Jacob Banister that Ruth should go to the fair with him. But it was by no means a matter on which his mind could be made up in a few minutes.

He pondered it all the way home; he pondered it, with repeated glasses of beer, during dinner. It was the ninth glass of beer which stiffened his rising spirit: he *would* defy Daubenay and obtain the injunction from Jacob Banister.

Fired with this courageous resolve, he set out briskly for the farm. A hundred yards from the gate a large motor car, meeting him, slowed down and stopped as he reached it.

"I beg your pardon, but can you tell me if we're anywhere near the Banister farm at East Brenton?" asked the gentleman sitting beside the driver.

"It's the house you passed a hundred yards back on the left," said the sterling Burbage, and his eyes wandered to the two ladies in the tonneau.

"The deuce it was!" said the stranger. "And perhaps you can tell me whether a gentleman of the name of Daubenay is staying there."

"There isn't any *gentleman* staying there," said Burbage.

"Oh, but there must be, my good man," said the older of the two ladies in a commanding croak. "We have excellent reasons for believing—in fact, we know that Mr. Daubenay is staying at the farm—taking a rest cure."

"Haw, haw, haw!" burst out the sterling Burbage. "That's right enough. He's a wonder to rest! He can't be

got to do anything else! Haw, haw, haw!"

"We're on the right track," said Scudamore to the ladies. Then, turning to Burbage, he added: "But why did you say he wasn't at the farm?"

"I didn't say he wasn't at the farm. I said that there wasn't any gentleman at the farm. We don't call a waiter a gentleman—not in East Brenton," said the sterling Burbage contemptuously.

"Oh—ah—a waiter—just so," said Scudamore.

Then in French he said to the ladies that it would not be a bad idea if he went on ahead and spied out the land.

They agreed, and he said in English:

"Take the car down the lane till you find a place where you can turn, Morton, and then drive her up to the farm. I'll go ahead, Lady Mary, and tell Daubenay that you're coming."

So saying, he stepped lightly out of the car onto the footpath.

XVIII

THE car started down the lane, and Burbage started toward the farm. Scudamore fell into step with him.

"It's odd that you should have got it into your head that Mr. Daubenay's a waiter," he said in his pleasantest tone.

"No, it isn't. If a man has nothing but dress suits, you naturally take him for a waiter," protested Burbage.

"Did he tell you that he was a waiter?"

"No, I can't rightly say as he actually said he was one. But we got it into our heads that he was connected with one of them there restaurants."

"Well, if having a bill running into three figures at two or three of them is being connected with them, he is," said Scudamore, thinking that the best way of inducing the young farmer to be open with him was to be open himself.

"Has he now? Bills running into three figures?" asked the sterling Burbage; and though his stolid face remained unchanged, his little pig's eyes began to gleam.

"He has," said Scudamore.

"Always having friends to dinner there, I suppose."

"Of course."

"And he isn't a waiter at all?"

"Of course he isn't a waiter! The Honorable James Daubenay—second son of Lord Kingsleigh—how should he be a waiter?"

Having been quite open with him, Scudamore felt that the time had come for him to learn things in his turn; and he asked:

"And what has Mr. Daubenay been doing with himself down here? How has he been amusing himself?"

"Mostly he's been gardening," said the sterling Burbage cautiously.

"Gardening!" cried Scudamore in a tone of quite incredulous surprise.

"Well, he made a mess of cleaning harness."

"Cleaning harness!" cried Scudamore.

"Yes; seeing as he thought he was a waiter, Mr. Banister set him to cleaning harness."

"Daubs—cleaning harness! Help!" cried Scudamore; and he laughed heartily. Then he went on: "But how has he been amusing himself? Who's he been making love to?"

"That's how he amuses himself, is it?"

"How else does a man-about-town amuse himself? Who is the lady?" said Scudamore.

The sterling Burbage chuckled grimly, and said:

"Oh, he is a man-about-town, is he? And the son of a lord!"

There was a very unpleasant tone of triumph in the sterling Burbage's voice.

It struck unpleasantly on Scudamore's ear; and it suddenly occurred to him that in his frank openness he might have been indiscreet.

"Oh, well, it really doesn't matter," he said, more in self-excuse than to Burbage. "We're going to motor him up to London."

"Ah, he'll want motoring somewhere when Mr. Banister hears about him," said the other in a sinister tone.

Scudamore felt a stronger uneasiness, and he said sharply:

"But, hang it all, what I've told you is in confidence."

"And I'm going to tell Mr. Banister in confidence. Haw, haw, haw!" said the sterling Burbage in the most brilliant sally of his life.

So saying he went briskly through the garden gate, letting it swing back on Scudamore, up the path and into the house.

Scudamore walked up the path much more slowly, and stood before the open front door, hesitating. He was in half a mind to retreat and await the reinforcements from the car.

There came a swift rustle of skirts, and of a sudden there stood enframed in the doorway the most bewitching vision of girlish loveliness he had ever set eyes on. Later he assured himself that she was the very image of a dark rose.

She looked at him in some surprise; and he stammered:

"Mr. D-D-Daubenay?"

"Oh!" she said sharply, and then in a delightful voice: "I'll tell him. Won't you come in?"

"No—er—no, thanks—not just yet. I've some more of his friends with me—in a car. I—I'll wait here for them," he said in a confusion none the less annoying that he could not help it.

"Very well. I'll send him to you," she said, and turned, frowning.

Scudamore felt yet more ill at ease. He had certainly found the woman without much seeking. But somehow he wished he had not; he could not say why exactly. Then he recovered himself a little; after all, it was only old Daubs, and it was rather late in the day to take old Daubs seriously.

Then there came a sound of brisk footsteps in the hall, and Daubenay, a very different, virile, alert Daubenay, stood before him, grave and frowning.

"Hullo, Daubs!" he said with a cheerfulness that did not ring quite easy.

"What the devil are you doing here?" asked Daubenay.

"I just motored down—"

"Did that scoundrel Pelly give you my address?" snapped Daubenay.

"No, he didn't. I happened to see a

letter he had readdressed to you. But, hang it all, what's all the fuss about? I just motored Lady Mary and Mrs. Constantine down to take you by surprise—"

"The devil you have! So you were spying for those two again, were you?" said Daubenay in a very unpleasant tone.

"Spying!" cried Scudamore hotly.

"Yes, spying," said Daubenay. "This is the second time you've sneaked my address for them and brought them down on me. You're too damned officious! That's what's the matter with you! For the future stop meddling with me and my affairs—altogether!"

"Well, I'm hanged!" said Scudamore softly.

He stared in utter bewilderment at Daubenay's set and angry face. He could hardly believe that it was Daubenay's, that Daubenay could look like that.

Then the car came up to the gate; Lady Mary and Cynthia descended from it, greeting Daubenay with shrill greetings, and came briskly up the garden path.

"What's the matter, Jim? What are you looking so glum about? Aren't you pleased to see us?" bleated Lady Mary with her most auntlike amiability.

"No, I'm not," said Daubenay sharply. "You're always forcing yourself on me because I've the misfortune to be your nephew; and I'm jolly well sick of it."

Daubenay could not remember having ever before been in such a royal rage. He was in great fear lest these intruders should spoil his attempt to save Ruth; and it was a relief and a pleasure to him to fall foul of Lady Mary. It was just possible, though, that he could drive them away before any harm was done.

Lady Mary blinked and gasped, and said faintly:

"What's this? What's this? Forcing myself on you?"

"Yes!" snapped Daubenay.

"B-b-but it isn't true. I—I—I—all I've ever done is to look after you. You can't look after yourself; you know you can't. You need—"

"I can look after myself a jolly sight better than you can look after me!"

roared Daubenay with sudden, Banisterine violence.

"You've no right to talk to mother like that, Jim!" broke in Mrs. Constantine hotly. "You know she only does it for your good!"

"And yours," sneered Daubenay.

He did not care what he said so long as he got rid of them before they harmed Ruth. He did not know that the frankness of the inquiring Scudamore had already done irreparable damage.

"Come, come, Daubenay; this isn't the way to talk to ladies," said Scudamore.

Daubenay turned on him sharply.

"Mind your own business, will you?"

It looked uncommonly as if the two men would in a moment be at one another's throats, when there came a diversion.

Ruth, flushed and excited, stood suddenly in the doorway and cried:

"Oh, Mr. Daubenay, my father's coming, and he's in a terrible state! You'd better get out of the way! You had, really!"

She looked over the group, letting her eyes dwell a moment on Mrs. Constantine, with an air of surprise, turned and vanished.

"I see—I see," said Lady Mary in a tone of deep meaning. "So it's one of your disgraceful intrigues, Jim. No wonder you wanted to get rid of us."

Jacob Banister burst out of the front door, his face blackish with fury, and roared at Daubenay:

"Oh, here you are, are you, you villain?"

"I'm here," said Daubenay, suddenly quite cool, in a tone of amiable cheerfulness.

The sterling Burbage stood in the doorway, grinning malignantly.

"And—and these are friends of yours, are they?" roared the farmer, embracing them in a comprehensive glare.

"No; relations," said Daubenay calmly. "Let me introduce you to my aunt, Lady Wynne, and my cousin, Mrs. Constantine. And this is a friend of theirs, a Mr. Scudamore—an idle, good-for-nothing man-about-town—no friend of mine."

"Oh, but he is! He told me he was, and that you were just such another as himself! I've had a little talk with this here Mr. Scudamore," cried the sterling Burbage in a tone of triumph.

"You silly, blabbing fool!" hissed Daubenay at his friend.

"And you told us you were a waiter!" roared Jacob Banister.

"Nonsense! You told me I was a waiter—both of you," said Daubenay.

"You told Mr. Daubenay he was a waiter!" broke in Lady Wynne with some indignation. "I never heard of such painful ignorance! Are you aware, my good man—"

"Yes, I am!" Jacob Banister bellowed at her. "I'm aware that this feller's a scoundrel and a waster. And from the look of them, his friends, or relations, are no better!"

"Sir!" cried Lady Wynne.

"Don't 'sir' me, woman! Get out of here and get out at once! This is an abode of purity—no place for the likes of you!" roared the farmer.

"I'm sure I've no wish to prolong this interview!" cried Lady Wynne.

"Go, woman! Go! And take these scoundrels and wasters with you!" roared the farmer.

Mrs. Constantine was already halfway to the gate, and she cried: "Come along, mother!"

Lady Wynne turned and went. Daubenay laughed unpleasantly. Scudamore followed her.

"And now you, sir! You get out, too! You're a black-hearted scoundrel and villain!" roared Jacob Banister at Daubenay.

"Rot! Don't talk through your hat! You know I'm nothing of the kind," said Daubenay calmly.

"I say you are! The light has come at last!"

"Rubbish!" said the unmoved Daubenay. "It's merely that your pet purple nincompoop has been sneaking again. You haven't had any light on the matter at all."

"I've had all the light I want!" cried the farmer, but with less assurance. "You clear out and at once!"

"Oh, very well—just as you like,"

said Daubenay; and he shrugged his shoulders. "I'll go and pack."

"You won't! You'll never darken my doors again! My mother will pack your clothes, and they'll be sent down to the station."

"Oh, very well—just as you like," said Daubenay, turning; and over his shoulder he added: "Say good-bye to Mrs. Banister for me, and to Miss Banister. Many thanks for your hospitality."

He had taken a couple of steps down the path when the sterling Burbage burst into a triumphant "Haw, haw, haw!"

Daubenay turned swiftly and took three quick steps back.

"Have *you* anything to say?" he asked in a very unpleasant tone, bending forward.

The sterling Burbage had so little to say that he made a kind of backward skip into the hall and slammed the front door.

Twenty yards down the road he found the car awaiting him.

"Come along, Jim. We'll motor you up to London, though you are so disagreeable," said Lady Wynne; and she addressed her nephew in a tone of greater respect than she had ever used to him.

Daubenay looked them all over quietly; then he said contemptuously:

"You can go to the devil!"

XIX

DAUBENAY let the first train go while he lingered in the village and on the road on the chance of getting a last word with Ruth. He failed in that; but he found a rosy-cheeked young girl at the fair, and gave her a sovereign and entrusted to her a note for Ruth, in which he begged her to let him know what action her father was taking after his discovery, and to let him help her in every possible way. Then he caught the next train to London and reached his flat at six o'clock.

He was not nearly so pleased to return to his peaceful home as he had expected. The sight of the sad-faced Pelly, as he opened the door to him, gave him but little pleasure; and he forthwith rated

him with a vigor to which he was quite unused for having let Scudamore surprise the secret of his address.

On the other hand, he found his hot bath a very pleasant change from the limited cold tub of the Banister farm, and it was pleasant to be comfortably shaved by the light-fingered Pelly.

He dressed, read his letters and motored down to the grill room of the Carlton. Daubenay had enjoyed the simple high tea of the farm greatly; but his splendid appetite applied to the food of the Carlton made it delicious beyond anything he had imagined. As he ate the grilled lobster, tears of joy welled up into his eyes.

Then he went with a friend to the Empire. At half past nine, to his great surprise, Daubenay found himself uncommonly sleepy. At a quarter to ten his sleepiness could no longer be denied, and he was forced to bid his astonished companion good night and take a taxicab home.

Pelly was at home; and when he learned that his master had come home to go to bed, his surprise was even greater.

Daubenay ordered a somewhat elaborate breakfast to be ready at nine o'clock the next morning. Then he said:

"I expect it will take me a few days to get into rational habits again."

"Meaning turning night into day, sir?" asked Pelly gloomily.

"Yes," said Daubenay cheerfully.

"I'm wondering whether it will suit Lady Wynne and Mrs. Constantine, sir," said Pelly doubtfully. "They've been talking of having some of their meals with you."

"What on earth do you mean?" cried Daubenay.

"Haven't they told you, sir?" asked Pelly in a tone of considerable surprise. "They've taken the flat over this one so as to be able to look after you better."

"Then I'll clear out at once!" cried Daubenay angrily. "No, I won't! I'll be hanged if I do! I'll stop here; but they shall never set foot in the place. Whenever they call, I'm out. If ever you let them get at me, you go. Understand that."

"Yes, sir," said Pelly, somewhat glumly, for he by no means liked the idea of repelling the resolute onslaughts of Lady Wynne.

Daubenay was a very little while falling asleep; but at five the next morning he found himself in a state of the liveliest wakefulness. He was fully alive to the absurdity of being wide awake at five o'clock in the morning in London. After a while he rose and fetched a recent French novel he had not read, and set about reading it. He had not gone very deep into it when he found that there was something wrong with him. He was not long discovering that he was hungry. There was no doubt about it: his stay in the country had affected him in much the same way as Scudamore's stay in the backwoods of Canada had affected him, for all that it had been so much shorter.

He would have reflected on the change in his nature had his impatient and clamorous stomach permitted it. As it was, in obedience to its clamor, he went to the kitchen, filled a kettle and set it on the gas ring.

Then he came to the conclusion that, fed or unfed, he had no desire to return to his bed. Therefore he took a bath, and was half dressed by the time the kettle boiled. He made some coffee and ate two thick slabs of bread and butter, as had been his habit at the farm. Then, since there was nothing in the way of a garden to work in at Gunnery Mansions, he went for a stroll. He found the London scenery most unsatisfactory after East Brenton; even Kensington Gardens failed to please him: they were too gravelly.

He returned to breakfast with a fine appetite.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon that he was struck by the inordinate length of the day: an empty waste of afternoon lay before him. Then he had a happy thought: he went to the fencing club and fenced for an hour. He was annoyed to find that he had become uncommonly rusty, and resolved to try to recover some of his old form.

At the end of three days he found himself still a long way from a comfortable

return to a rational life. He was still unpleasantly sleepy at nine o'clock at night and unpleasantly wakeful at five o'clock in the morning. In these circumstances the rational life was impossible.

On the third evening his sleepiness broke up a pleasant night with the Night Hawks at its very beginning.

At the farm he had again and again thought how pleasant it would be to get back to London and civilization. Now that he had got back to them, he found them lacking. In some odd fashion the spice had gone out of them, and they no longer satisfied him. Also he was uncommonly restless.

Ruth filled his thoughts far more than he had expected. Often at odd, unlikely moments her image would rise uncommonly clear and vivid before the eyes of his mind. He often found himself wondering about her, but without anxiety. He was quite sure that she would write to him if she were in trouble.

As it happened, Ruth was in London. After Daubenay had left the farm, Jacob Banister, taking Burbage into the parlor, had called to Ruth to come to him.

"Now, miss, I've got to the bottom of things at last!" he cried, in a loud, blustering voice. "I've found out all about that scoundrel. He's no more a waiter than I am!"

Ruth met his glare with steady eyes and said in a most unamiable tone:

"Nobody ever said he was a waiter except you and this silly Joe."

"You could have set us right about the scoundrel! You could have told us he wasn't a waiter! Instead of which you let us go on being deceived!" roared her father.

"I told you he was a gentleman, and you wouldn't believe me," said Ruth, quite unperturbed.

"A fine gentleman!" cried Jacob Banister.

"Well, he behaved like a gentleman to me, anyhow," said Ruth.

"That's what you say," said the sterling Burbage.

"You mind your own business!" snapped Ruth, scowling fiercely at him.

"It is his business!" roared her father.

"Joe's willing to let bygones be bygones and marry you. And the banns'll be put up next Sunday."

"They won't!" said Ruth. "There aren't any bygones to be bygones; and there won't be any banns put up next Sunday or any other Sunday. I wouldn't marry Joe if he were the only man left alive in the world—so there!"

"You are to marry him! I've seen the light; and the light bids me see that you marry him. He's a worthy young fellow, Joe is; and he'll stand none of your nonsense, he won't," cried her father.

"He won't get the chance. I won't marry him," said Ruth stubbornly.

"You'll marry him or you'll go! I won't have any young hussies in this house!" roared Jacob Banister. "I've had enough of it! Take him, or go!"

"I'll go," said Ruth calmly.

Jacob Banister ground his teeth and glared at her with raging, helpless eyes.

"That's your last word?"

"Yes," said Ruth.

Jacob Banister ground his teeth again, walked to the window and stared out of it. Then he turned and growled:

"I'm going to give you time to come to your senses. I'll give you till twelve tomorrow to come to your senses and take Joe. If you won't, you can clear out."

"I may as well start packing at once," said Ruth; and she went out of the room with her head high in the air.

XX

RUTH came to London in uncommonly good spirits. She was not without money. Her grandmother had given her five pounds and had promised to send her money from the sale of her butter, eggs and chickens every week. Surely she would find some kind of work before she came to the end of it. But the greatest and most heartening thought of all was that she would soon see Daubenay again.

Not at once of course; she would by no means let him see her till she had found some work and he was relieved of any necessity of quixotic behavior. The

proper person for him to marry was undoubtedly this cousin to whom he had already been twice engaged. But that need not prevent him from being friendly with her. He would not have much time to spend on such a friendship, but they could see one another sometimes.

She had telegraphed to Mrs. Mulcaster that she was coming, and since she was resolved to do nothing till she had consulted her, she left her trunk in the cloakroom at Paddington station and took a taxicab to 31 Branston Square.

A smart-looking parlor maid opened the door and gazed at her in manifest surprise when she asked for Mrs. Mulcaster, then led her up to a simply, expensively furnished drawing room on the first floor.

On the wall facing the door, a little to the right of the window, in the best light, hung the portrait of an uncommonly beautiful woman whose face was oddly familiar to her, though she could not remember that she had ever set eyes on it. She was studying it with a puzzled, knitted brow when the parlor maid returned and said that Mrs. Mulcaster would be with her in a few minutes.

Ruth thanked her and continued to study the perplexing picture. A few minutes later it flashed on her of a sudden that the face was so familiar to her because it was so like her own. When she was as old as the original of the portrait it would indeed be very like her.

She was considering this odd discovery when the door opened and the original of the portrait came quickly into the room. She wore an air of pleased, excited expectancy; her lips were parted, she was breathing quickly, and her eyes were shining very brightly. Ruth fancied that there were tears in them. She crossed the room quickly to Ruth, caught both her hands in hers, bent forward and kissed her warmly. She drew her down on to a couch beside her and looking at her closely, cried:

"Oh, the likeness!" Then she added: "But you ought never to have come here—never. Though I am so glad to see you."

Ruth, remembering the disparaging phrases of the Night Hawks, felt her heart sink a little. But she said firmly:

"But I'd nowhere else to go."

"Nowhere else to go?" cried Mrs. Mulcaster.

"No. My father has turned me out," said Ruth.

"Oh, that horror Jacob!" cried Mrs. Mulcaster, with much more disgust than surprise in her voice.

On the words the scales fell from Ruth's eyes; and she said on a high, startled note:

"Why! Why! You're my mother!"

Mrs. Mulcaster's eyes filled with dread; she drew a little away from her, and said in a somewhat shaky voice:

"Yes. I'm your—your wicked mother."

"Oh, but you're not! You're not wicked!" cried Ruth. "Anyone could see that you're not wicked!"

And she threw her arms round her mother's neck and kissed her.

Mrs. Mulcaster returned her kisses, but she said:

"I *am* wicked. Anyone would tell you so. I ran away from your father."

"I don't care! I don't care a bit!" cried Ruth.

They kissed and cried over one another, murmuring endearments for some minutes. Then, when they had grown calmer, Mrs. Mulcaster said anxiously:

"But how came your father to turn you out?"

Ruth told her the whole story. Mrs. Mulcaster was very angry and indignant at the unfairness and injustice of the treatment her father had meted out to her; and with the sincerest conviction she cried:

"Jacob always was a brute! But this is disgraceful! Absolutely indefensible! Whatever did he think was going to become of you? Why, anything might have happened to you!"

"I don't think he cared," said Ruth bitterly. "He'd been brooding and brooding over my going to Mr. Daubenay's flat and mixing it up with that queer religion of his till I should think he was half mad."

"Even if he'd been quite mad, it

would be no excuse for his acting like that," said Mrs. Mulcaster fiercely. She paused and added: "Did he talk about getting the light?"

"Yes," said Ruth.

"He would—oh, he would!" said Mrs. Mulcaster with genuine feeling.

Then she went on to question Ruth at some length about Daubenay. Ruth was annoyed at being unable to talk about him without blushing in a very silly fashion, and the mother perceived quite clearly that he had indeed taken her girlish fancy.

"He certainly behaved quite nicely, though of course he oughtn't to have kissed you. Still, he made it clear that it wasn't serious. But he would behave nicely. I've heard a good deal about James Daubenay at different times: I know friends of his. It's just like him to turn night into day and day into night."

"He soon got them right again at the farm," said Ruth.

"And he'll soon get them wrong again now that he's back in London," said her mother. "But he does go about with such dreadful people—those Night Hawks—they're perfectly awful."

Ruth's eyes opened wide as she remembered the disparaging fashion in which Madame Leonille and Miss Montresor had spoken of her mother.

The next few days were exciting and delightful. Mrs. Mulcaster established her in a delightful sitting room and bedroom at the top of the house. She took her to her dressmaker and milliner; had her fitted with delightful dresses and hats; sent her to matinees in charge of Céleste, her French maid.

But she insisted that Ruth should keep her country hours. She sent her to bed at nine o'clock. There was a spirit stove on which to make her tea when she awoke early in the morning; and if it was fine she went for a walk in the park till her breakfast at nine o'clock. That walk was always full of interest and excitement, for she had it in mind that it was Daubenay's habit to walk home to bed across the park at eight in the morning, and she walked in a continual expectation of seeing him. She

did not know that he had not yet broken himself of the subversive country habits he had acquired at the farm.

XXI

DAUBENAY was growing more and more restless.

None of his former pursuits really interested him now. The Night Hawks merely bored him; the theaters and music halls bored him; the talk at his clubs bored him. He was growing inclined to curse the night on which he had diverged from the quiet course of his life into that troublous farm at East Brenton.

He had kept Lady Wynne and Cynthia at arm's, or rather at a story's, length with cold firmness. It was a hard struggle; and Pelly bore the brunt of it. The unfortunate valet was getting the full night's rest for which he had so keenly longed, only to be harassed at odd hours of the day by cruel and exhausting battles with Lady Wynne.

Two or three times Cynthia made strenuous efforts of her own to get at him in his flat. Pelly, however, had much less difficulty in dealing with her, and balked them. He enjoyed balking them; Lady Wynne was embittering him; he avenged himself firmly on her daughter.

It was about the eighth day that Daubenay awoke to the fact that his restlessness arose from his desire to see Ruth again; and he acted on the discovery with a promptness which would have been astonishing before his stay at East Brenton. He sent a prepaid telegram to the farm, timing it to arrive at a time when Jacob Banister would be out in the meadows, asking her if all were well.

The answer startled him indeed; it ran:

Ruth left a week ago. I do not know her address yet.
ELSIE BANISTER.

He was not only startled by it—he was alarmed, and also he was hurt. He felt that she had failed him in not availing herself of his aid; the thought stung him. But presently his sense of injury

was swallowed up in his alarm. Where was she? What had happened to her? She was not with Mrs. Mulcaster; at least it did not seem likely, for he had seen that lady twice during the last five days, dining, once at Prince's and once at the Ritz. He passed a disturbed day, and coming home to bed early, had been a long while falling asleep, though the night before the Night Hawks had spent a noisy, cheerful time in his rooms, only departing at dawn.

He was not made any easier in mind by receiving a letter from Mrs. Banister next morning, in which she said that her son had turned Ruth out of the house a week ago, on her refusal to marry Joe Burbage, and she was expecting to hear from her as soon as she had settled down. The old lady seemed quite free from alarm; in a postscript she said that Ruth had plenty of money. But Daubenay did not share her ease of mind: he knew his London too well. On the other hand, he could not but admit that Ruth was very far from being a fool and should be able to take care of herself. But a man never really believes that a girl can take care of herself.

He was uneasy and disturbed all the morning; in the afternoon he had a happy thought: he would call on Mrs. Mulcaster and inquire if she knew anything about Ruth's doings since she left East Brenton.

Mrs. Mulcaster greeted him graciously. Coming at once to the heart of the matter, he said:

"I called to inquire about Miss Banister. She told me that you were a friend of hers—the only friend she has in London. She left home a week ago, and her people don't know where she is. I thought I'd call and ask you if you knew."

By a slight effort she reduced her eyes and face to an expression of the most limpid candor, and said:

"I haven't the slightest idea."

It was quite true: Ruth had gone out for a walk, and Mrs. Mulcaster had not the slightest idea whether she was at the moment in Hyde Park, or Kensington Gardens, or in one of the streets between.

Daubenay's face fell; and he said quickly:

"Hasn't she written to you?"

"Not a word," said Mrs. Mulcaster, again with perfect truth.

"Hang it!" said Daubenay ruefully.

"How did you come to know Miss Banister?" she said.

"Oh, it's—it's rather a long story," said Daubenay, thinking that quite enough people knew it already. "Would you mind—I should be awfully obliged if you'd let me know if you did hear from her. I'm—I'm—well, the fact is I'm anxious about her."

"Oh, I couldn't possibly do that!" cried Mrs. Mulcaster with firm decision.

"Why not?" asked Daubenay.

Mrs. Mulcaster hesitated and tried to look as if she were desirous of not hurting his feelings; then she said:

"Oh, well, you go about with such curious people."

"Such curious people!" said Daubenay, somewhat taken aback as he remembered how those curious people spoke of Mrs. Mulcaster.

"Yes; I saw you dining at the Ritz the other evening with that hat woman—I've forgotten her name; I used to buy hats from her till I found that they were no good—and her assistant—and people who looked even worse. I couldn't possibly let you know the whereabouts of a quiet country girl like Miss Banister."

It was on the tip of Daubenay's tongue to suggest that the mind of Mrs. Mulcaster was hardly the place for this delicacy of sentiment, when he realized quite suddenly and very clearly that she belonged to his own caste and had therefore a right to be more or less a law unto herself. She was hardly to be judged by the common, conventional, moral standard. Conduct which was quite unbecoming in Madame Leonille or Miss Montresor was in her a very different matter; and after all, he had no really trustworthy word that she was notorious. For anything he knew she might be received in very good houses.

"You're quite wrong—absolutely wrong," he said sadly.

"Oh, I may be," she said gracefully.

"But they are very noisy, you know—

those people. So I'm afraid I shan't be able to let you know if I do hear from Miss Banister."

There was a tone of finality in her voice.

"Well, if you won't," said Daubenay sadly, "please pardon my having bothered you about the matter. Good-bye."

"Oh, not at all—not at all," she said quickly: "Good-bye."

Daubenay came out of the house disappointed and depressed. Also he was somewhat perplexed. Mrs. Mulcaster's face and some of the tones of her voice were oddly familiar to him. Yet he had assuredly never met her before. He walked along, cudgeling his brains for the person of his acquaintance whom she resembled; and for a long while he cudged them in vain. Then of a sudden it flashed on him; and so startling was the discovery that he stopped short for a moment. Of course it was Ruth! Why, Ruth was the very image of her! She was Ruth's lost mother!

He considered his discovery with mixed feelings. At first he found himself quite unwarrantably annoyed and angry that Ruth should be the daughter of the notorious Mrs. Mulcaster, for, after all, it was no intimate concern of his. It was no use his trying to persuade himself that he was merely sorry for Ruth, because it was quite plain to him that he was angry and annoyed. But after a while his anger and annoyance faded. After all, he was the only person who knew it; it need never become a matter of common knowledge. In the end even his annoyance passed away; and he found that in some curious fashion this meeting with her mother had deepened his appreciation of Ruth herself. She was plainly so very much the daughter of her mother; and her mother was not only a charming woman but so plainly of his own caste—with a right, more or less, to morals of her own.

XXII

RUTH thought for a while of writing to Daubenay, telling him that she was in London, and asking him to meet her

one morning at six o'clock at Hyde Park Corner on his way home to bed. Then she had a great idea: she would go and call on him at his flat, and of course she would call on him in the evening—after breakfast. During the day he would be in bed.

Of course it was not quite the thing to do—girls, nice girls, did not call on men in their flats—but that was really because the men were not nice men; Daubenay was so different. Any girl might call on Daubenay. He was—well, he was a gentleman. It was possible, indeed it was likely, that she would find the Night Hawks there. It would be awkward. They would probably think, and perhaps say, horrid things. But, after all, they would not bite. She had met them before.

She played with the idea all the afternoon, frequently telling herself that of course she would not dream of doing anything so—so forward. But all the time she knew very well that she would. Really, the evening frock had settled the matter.

Her mother, quite unaware of Ruth's purpose, went out to dine soon after half past seven. At a quarter to eight Ruth asked Céleste to do her hair for her in the latest fashion. Céleste found it a labor of love. Her hair done, Ruth put on the charming frock; her mirror informed her that she was ravishing. She came downstairs in a lively excitement and expectancy, slipped out of the house, hailed the first taxicab that passed and bade the chauffeur drive her to Daubenay's flat.

About the time that the taxicab started from Branstons Square the bell of Daubenay's flat rang, and on opening the door, Pelly found Mrs. Constantine standing outside it.

"Mr. Daubenay's out," said Pelly hastily.

"He's always out," said Cynthia in a tone of cold incredulity.

"He really is out, ma'am," said Pelly.

"Then I'll come in and wait for him," said Cynthia.

Pelly made as if to bar her entrance, saying:

"I'm afraid it's impossible, ma'am. Mr. Daubenay gave the strictest orders—"

"Stand back!" broke in Cynthia fiercely.

Pelly stood back; and she walked past him into Daubenay's smoking room, and slammed the door behind her.

Once inside the door, Cynthia shook out her skirts as if the purely spiritual struggle with Pelly had disarranged them and smiled a quiet, slow smile of triumph. She looked round the room, deliberately, and walked straight across it to the writing table. Half a dozen scented notes lay about it, open. She sniffed at them contemptuously, and caught up Mrs. Banister's letter.

She read it quickly, threw it down, and stood with knitted brow, considering it. Then she muttered:

"So that was it! He's gone and got entangled with that silly little country girl. I wonder how long she thinks she can hold him?"

She laughed a faint, contemptuous laugh, took a cigarette from the box beside the letters, lighted it and sat down in an easy chair. The bell of the flat rang.

Pelly opened the door, found Ruth on the threshold, after a hard stare recognized her, and gasped.

"Is Mr. Daubenay in?" she asked, smiling at him.

"No, miss," said Pelly.

"Not in? Has he gone out already?" she cried; and her face fell.

"He's not gone out, miss. He hasn't come in—not since dinner," said Pelly. Then his heart softened at the sight of her disappointment, and he added: "But I'm expecting him back soon, miss. If you were to come back in half an hour you'd very likely find him."

"Oh, I won't go away—I'll wait," said Ruth; and her face grew bright again.

"You can't do that, miss," said Pelly, lowering his voice. "Mrs. Constantine, his cousin, is waiting for him. He doesn't know she's here. She *would* come in."

Right feeling demanded that, on hearing this, Ruth should depart for good

and all. But a sudden wave of violent detestation of Daubenay's cousin swept right feeling out of her heart.

"Are they engaged again?" she asked rather breathlessly.

"Not yet, miss. But I shouldn't wonder if they got engaged before the night was out. Mrs. Constantine is a very determined lady, miss," said Pelly in a deeply confidential tone.

"Is she?" said Ruth through her clenched teeth.

"She is, miss. Ah, Mr. Daubenay doesn't realize what he's in for once he's married."

The flood of Ruth's dislike of Mrs. Constantine swelled beyond all bounds; and she said in a very cold, incisive tone:

"I'll wait, too."

"Very well, miss," said Pelly; and there was almost a touch of glee in his tone as he realized that the poison and the antidote were both in the flat. "You'd better wait in the dining room; Mrs. Constantine's in the smoking room."

"Oh, no," said Ruth with cold decision. "I'll wait in the smoking room, too. Please show me into it."

Pelly hesitated, looking closely at her; then, with a Briton's natural recognition of real pluck, he yielded, saying with unfeigned, deferential admiration:

"Very well, miss. This way."

He threw open the door of the smoking room; and slowly, with a very dignified air, Ruth walked into it. Pelly shut the door with quiet deliberation and hastily glued his ear to the keyhole.

Mrs. Constantine, who was biting the exquisitely manicured nail of the thumb of her left hand, looked up at the sound of the opening door; then she stood up. She stood up quickly.

"Why—who—what—" she said faintly.

"How do you do? I think I saw you at my father's a little while ago," said Ruth in a tone of peculiarly disagreeable sweetness.

Neither woman's heart was in her words; it was in the eyes with which she devoured the other woman; and at the moment both their hearts were uncommonly black.

There was a pause while they thus regarded one another; and at the end of it a faint smile of triumph, confident triumph, was wreathing Ruth's lips: she was better dressed than Mrs. Constantine.

Cynthia's face was for a moment—half a moment—utterly downcast. Then a smile of very bitter contempt deepened the lines round her lips; and in a bitterly contemptuous tone she said:

"What are you doing here—in my cousin's flat at night?"

She expected that Ruth would be utterly taken aback to learn that she was Daubenay's cousin. But Ruth said calmly:

"Oh, I came"—she sat down slowly in a facing easy chair—"I came to see him."

"Then I must ask you to leave the flat at once. Mr. Daubenay hasn't the slightest desire to see you," said Cynthia in a very unpleasant tone.

On the strength of the letter she had just read, she thought she would chance Daubenay's having telegraphed to Mrs. Banister in genuine ignorance of Ruth's whereabouts.

"Hasn't he? How do you know he hasn't?" asked Ruth, making the incredulity in her voice as clear as she possibly could.

"You must take my word for it! Be so good as to go at once!" snapped Cynthia, scowling at her.

"I want to see Mr. Daubenay," said Ruth quietly.

Her eyes, bright with the insolent triumph of youth and freshness, met the raging eyes of her rival steadily, unperturbed.

"I tell you you can't—you shan't see him! Why, it's positively outrageous! Will you go?" stormed Cynthia.

"Why should I? I've as much right to be here as you have—more," said Ruth, thinking that she was a much truer friend of Daubenay than this spiteful, painted lady.

"What!" cried Cynthia.

"More right," said Ruth stubbornly.

"Good heavens! You don't mean to say he's been fool enough to marry you!" cried Cynthia in a tone of the last horror.

"Of course he hasn't," said Ruth.

"Oh, so that's it, is it? It's perfectly disgraceful!" cried Cynthia.

"What is?" said Ruth quickly.

"I knew he was up to something horrid, or he wouldn't have stayed at that wretched farm," said Cynthia.

"He wasn't up to anything horrid at all!" said Ruth indignantly.

"But, my good girl, you mustn't think that it gives you any right to force yourself into his flat at this hour of the night. You haven't any rights of any kind—you haven't really."

"I think you're mad!" cried Ruth scornfully. "I've a better right than you to be here, because I'm a friend of Mr. Daubenay's and you're not—not really. I know it by the way he talked of you."

"Let me tell you that we're engaged to be married—we've been engaged for the last six months!" cried Cynthia fiercely.

"Oh, no," said Ruth quietly, shaking her head.

"It's a fact!" cried Cynthia.

"Well, if it were, it wouldn't matter. You can't really care for him, or you wouldn't let him lead the life he does."

"I don't see any use in prolonging this discussion," sneered Cynthia. "Perhaps, now that you know the facts, you'll be good enough to go."

"Oh, dear, no, I'm not going," said Ruth with calm firmness, and she settled herself more comfortably in the easy chair with an air of inexorable resolution.

Mrs. Constantine ground her teeth.

"Go! At once!" she cried.

"Oh, no; I came to see Mr. Daubenay, and I'm going to stay till I've seen him—if he's not dreadfully late," said Ruth with unbroken calm.

Mrs. Constantine ground her teeth again. She had wild thoughts of tearing Ruth from the easy chair and flinging her out of the flat. But as likely as not Ruth was stronger than she. The situation was impossible. There would in any case have been something of a struggle when Daubenay came in and found her there. For him to come and find her with this detestable girl was impossible—just impossible.

"Very well," she said in a tone and

with an air of the most impressive dignity. "In that case there is only one thing for me to do." She walked slowly to the door and opened it. "I will withdraw myself."

"Thank you," said Ruth politely.

XXIII

THE door slammed behind Mrs. Constantine; and there was a very unkind smile on Ruth's face as Pelly let her irritated rival out of the flat. Then her face fell; she felt sincerely sorry for Daubenay; he had so poor a chance of getting any happiness out of a marriage with such a creature as that.

She had no long time to grieve for him. The bell of the flat rang; there was a pause while Pelly opened the door, and then a chorus of shrieks and yells turned the flat into a pandemonium. The door of the room was flung open; Mr. Blake and Miss Montresor, supported by Madame Leonille, stood on the threshold emitting ear-splitting shrieks; then there was a sudden silence as they stared at her.

"How do you do? You seem to have forgotten me," said Ruth calmly.

"Why—why—it's little Miss Buttercup!" cried Miss Montresor.

"Oh, my hat! It's little Miss Buttercup dressed by Paquin!" cried Mr. William Blake.

"Little Miss who?" cried O'Hara in the hall.

But Madame Leonille pushed past the others into the room, frowning, with a flushed face.

"Oh, this is too bad of Daubs!" she cried angrily. "It's—it's—oh, well, really, it's a bit too thick!"

Ruth was touched by Madame Leonille's indignation on her behalf; and she cried in a clearly ringing voice:

"You're quite wrong, all of you. Mr. Daubenay doesn't know I'm here; he doesn't even know I'm in London. He thinks I'm still in the country."

"Then old Daubs is going to get the surprise of a lifetime," said Blake in a somewhat discontented tone.

"Yes, yes! Let's make it a real surprise!" cried Miss Montresor. "This is

a surprise party; and the kid will be a bit extra."

"Right O!" cried Mr. William Blake with enthusiasm.

"We'll hide her behind the curtain here; and at the right moment O'Hara shall pull it aside," cried Miss Montresor. It was arranged that Ruth was to slip behind it as Daubenay entered the flat; and Pelly was warned not to tell him that she had come.

Then the Night Hawks abandoned themselves to the sports that they loved. The strange, tall, white young man sat down at the piano and drew a melody from it which O'Hara and Miss Sally Bangs accompanied with two equally powerful but quite different voices, Miss Sally Bangs in English, O'Hara in a rich Dundalk French. The others romped furiously. They danced singly, or in pairs, but always wildly; and the most important step in their different dances was the step which tripped up someone else. The strange, short, pink young man displayed a happy taste in ear splitting yells; and Mr. William Blake strained his vocal chords in brave efforts to out-yell him.

Ruth laughed and laughed; Pelly shuddered in his pantry.

At last Daubenay's key grated in the lock.

Ruth had had no intention whatever of falling in with their sprightly views and taking Daubenay by surprise, but almost before she knew what was happening, Madame Leonille and Miss Montresor had hustled her behind the curtain and drawn it. She felt that it would be silly to come bursting out at once; she felt that something in the nature of a cue was needed for her appearance on the scene. She contented herself therefore with opening the curtain a little so that she could see what happened. Her heart leapt at the sight of Daubenay on the threshold of the room.

He came in smiling a somewhat weary smile while the Night Hawks cheered and yelled and squealed; and when the clamor had died down enough for a word or two to be heard above it, he said patiently:

"This is a surprise. How are you all?"

They all assured him in their different fashions and violently that they were well. O'Hara slapped him hard on the back, Mr. William Blake wrung his right hand, the strange, tall, white young man his left. Madame Leonille poked him in the ribs, so did Miss Montresor; Miss Sally Bangs could not reach his ribs for the throng. Miss Clare Clarice shrieked some strident information about her success at the Clapton Empire the night before, and the strange, short, pink young man gyrated enthusiastically on one leg. Daubenay called to Pelly to bring champagne.

Miss Montresor and O'Hara had drawn a little apart, and were agreeing that it was nearly time to draw the curtain, when the bell of the flat rang.

There came a lull in the chatter; and a harsh voice was heard asking whether Mr. Daubenay lived there. Ruth thrilled to her father's growl, and was heartily glad that she was behind the curtain.

Pelly, always diplomatic, and distrusting Jacob Banister's square beard, said:

"I'll see, sir."

"No, you won't. I'll see," growled Jacob Banister; and he thrust past him.

He strode across the hall into the smoking room and stopped short, blinking and staring round him at the brightly dressed ladies, who were regarding him with an astonishment greater than his own.

"How do you do, Mr. Banister?" said Daubenay coldly.

"I—I didn't come here to be polite. I came to see if my daughter was here," growled Banister.

"She isn't," said Daubenay curtly.

"Then where have you put her?" growled Jacob Banister.

"I'm afraid you're drunk," said Daubenay in a very unpleasant tone. "I haven't seen your daughter since I left your house."

Banister gazed at him with sullen, incredulous eyes, scowled and cried:

"Then where is she?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Daubenay haughtily.

"If it isn't you, it's some other blackguard she's fallen into the hands of!" growled the farmer.

"Mr. Daubenay isn't a blackguard!" cried Miss Montresor.

Above the assenting murmur of the Night Hawks came the voice of Daubenay clear and very stern:

"I don't believe it! And if she has it's your own fault."

"Yours, you mean," snapped the farmer. "A girl mixed up with the likes of you is not a fit inmate of a Christian household."

"What have you got to do with Christianity?" demanded Daubenay yet more sternly. "Your wife ran away from you because you made her life a hell; and you turned out your daughter merely that you might feel extra righteous."

"Hear! Hear!" cried Madame Leonille.

Miss Montresor and Miss Sally Bangs clapped their hands.

Jacob Banister glared round at them, looking far more like an angry lion than a Christian martyr, and cried:

"I don't want to bandy words with such as you—predestined to eternal damnation, the whole lot of you! I—"

"That'll do," said Daubenay sharply. "You can go, Mr. Banister. If you came here in the hope of being able to gloat over your daughter, you've come to the wrong place. And I tell you that, wherever you go for that purpose, you'll go to the wrong place. But we've no use for you here; no decent people have any use for you." He raised his voice and added: "Pelly, show Mr. Banister out!"

Jacob Banister glared furiously at Daubenay's stern face. Ruth, watching it from the corner of the curtain, thought that she had never seen a face so noble. It thrilled her; and his voice thrilled her.

Pelly appeared at the door, wearing an air of pained disapproval. Without another word Jacob Banister turned on his heel and flung heavily out of the flat.

Then Mr. Blake laughed.

It was the signal: all the Night Hawks

laughed, and most of them jumped up and down; they shrieked with laughter.

"What's the joke?" roared Daubenay above the tumult.

Their mirth seemed somewhat excessive after that serious interview with Jacob Banister.

"Show him! Show him!" cried several voices.

O'Hara sprang to the curtain, caught the edge of it and cried:

"Let me introjuice you—Mister Pygmalion, Miss Ghalateeah!"

With that he swept the curtain aside and revealed to Daubenay's astonished eyes the ravishing vision of the smiling, blushing Ruth.

"She was there all the time!" cried Miss Montresor.

"And the old haybag never tumbled to it!" cried the tall, white young man.

"And Daubs—virtuous Daubs doing the cartload of bricks trick!" howled Mr. William Blake.

The Night Hawks yelled and danced again. Ruth sat down in the window seat, looking like a queen of the revels.

The surprise in Daubenay's eyes faded to a blank dismay. But he was quick to act. He swung O'Hara out of the midst of the dancers and muttered sternly in his ear:

"What rotten, silly nonsense is this?"

"We found her here when we came," said the Irishman.

"This is a devil of a mess!" snapped Daubenay. "Look here: get these noisy idiots away for me, will you? Take them to supper somewhere."

He thrust a ten-pound note into O'Hara's hand.

"No tricks, me bhoy?" said O'Hara faintly suspicious.

"Certainly not!" snapped Daubenay. O'Hara's fingers tightened on the note, and he said joyfully:

"R-r-roight you are, me bhoy!"

Then he sprang into the middle of the room, and bellowed in his fine concert voice:

"Supper! Ladies and gentlemen—supper! You'll all of you sup with me at the Français in honor of this auspicious occasion. Hurry up! Mister Pygmalion will bring Miss Ghalateeah! Hooroosh!"

The word "supper" was enough for the Night Hawks, or at any rate for the ladies among them. There was a brisk movement toward the door; and in about half a minute all Daubenay's guests, except Ruth, were in the hall. The door of the flat was opened and they were moving out, when O'Hara put his head in at the door of the smoking room and said:

"You'll be bringing Miss Buttercup along yourself?"

"We're coming—we're coming," said Daubenay.

O'Hara shut the door.

Daubenay stood still with a frown of perplexity on his brow, glancing at Ruth. She leaned back in the window seat watching him, ill at ease, almost timorous. She felt that he was displeased, that she was in for a scolding. The consciousness of extreme rectitude of intention did not greatly buoy her up.

The door of the flat banged, and there was silence.

"Well?" said Daubenay in a tone of some severity.

"Well, what?" said Ruth.

"How did you come here?"

"In a taxi," said Ruth simply.

"I don't mean that. I mean how did it come about that you came here?" he said a little impatiently.

"I came to see you."

"At this hour?" he said reproachfully.

"Well, what other time could I come? You're asleep all day," said Ruth.

"Oh, I see. You didn't know that my visit to East Brenton had quite spoiled me for the rational life—for the time being," he said; and the cloud lifted a little from his brow.

"I am so glad! It must be so bad for you—sleeping all day," she cried.

"Not a bit of it," he said quickly.

"But what have you been doing? No one hears anything of you for a week; and then you turn up in my rooms dressed like—like—like a—"

"Night Hawk?" suggested Ruth.

"Yes—yes—like a Night Hawk. Where did you get that frock?"

"It was given me," said Ruth.

"Given you? Who gave it to you?" he cried jealously.

He had quite lost his air of severity; he looked merely anxious and angry. Ruth had quite recovered her confidence; she knew, though she could have given no reason for the knowledge, that she was mistress of the situation.

"Oh, it was given me," she said.

"Who gave it to you? I insist on knowing!" he cried fiercely, taking a couple of steps toward her.

Towering over her, he looked so formidable that she lost her sense of advantage.

"Mrs. Mulcaster," she said meekly.

"Mrs. Mulcaster!" he said in blank amaze.

"Yes; I'm living with her."

"Living with—with— Oh, come! That'll never do! Mrs. Mulcaster isn't at all the kind of person—"

"You mustn't say anything against her! She's—she's my mother!" cried Ruth.

"Hang it all! Surely she didn't go and tell you?" cried Daubenay.

"It didn't want any telling—I knew her at once," said Ruth.

"Yes, you would. I did," said Daubenay somewhat mournfully.

"You did?" she cried.

"Yes. I went to see her this afternoon—to find out if she knew what had become of you. I was getting anxious."

"She never told me anything about it," said Ruth in some surprise.

"And she never told me anything about you," said Daubenay. "She seemed to think me far too bad a lot to be told anything."

"Ah, but she doesn't know you," said Ruth.

The stress had passed out of their interview. Daubenay was content that she should be there; he was taking pleasure, a growing pleasure, in her presence. His eyes were warm with admiration; she kept flushing faintly under his gaze. His voice had fallen to caressing tones which thrilled her.

Then his voice grew troubled again as he said:

"It was a confounded nuisance those Night Hawks turning up when you were here."

"Oh, but they quite understood that

you didn't know anything about it," said Ruth.

"That won't stop them talking," he said.

He took a step or two across the room, frowning, though his eyes, which could not leave her, had lost none of their admiration. As he came back again Ruth said in a small voice:

"That wasn't all—your cousin was here when I came."

"Cynthia Constantine!" cried Daubenay.

Ruth nodded.

"That's done it! That *has* done it!" he cried.

"I was afraid it had. And—and—I was rather rude to her—not as rude as she was to me, though."

"Goodness! You won't have a shred of character left—not a shred!" he cried in a hopeless tone.

"It's very unfair—I haven't done anything," protested Ruth.

"Of course not. But there you are. What on earth is to be done?"

He strode up and down once more, frowning; then he turned sharply, dropped down onto the window seat beside Ruth, caught her hand and said:

"Little girl, you'll have to marry me."

"Certainly not!" cried Ruth, blushing furiously and trying to draw her hand away. "That wasn't what I meant at all!"

"I know you didn't," he said quickly. "But look here: you do rather like me, don't you?"

"Oh, I can't have it—I can't have you doing a quixotic thing like that just to help me," she protested.

"Quixotic be hanged!" he cried, taking her other hand, and forcing her to turn her face to his ardent eyes. "I can't get on without you. I can't settle to any blessed thing—I can't enjoy any blessed thing—I can't think of any blessed thing for two consecutive minutes, except you. I want you as I never wanted anything in my life before!"

He bent forward and kissed her.

"You will marry me, won't you?" he said.

"Oh, well," said Ruth rather faintly, "you don't—don't look at me—at me—as if you were doing something quixotic—as if you didn't really want to—so I—I think I will."

James Daubenay laughed softly.



MARY'S EYES

By Hermann Hagedorn

YOU spy the fairies where they run
From cover swift to shadowy cover,
You spy the stars, while yet is day,
Romp through heaven in girlish glee;
You pierce disguises, every one,
And 'neath the blackest you discover
An airy comrade for your play
Whom God thought only He could see.



MRS. BLUFFE—Melba sounded hoarse last night.
MRS. HUFF—Your record must have got cold.

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, FURNITURE OR WALL PAPER
—measured to the extent of the book

ARGOSIES

By Victor Starbuck

THE ghosts of ancient argosies,
Whose hulks decay in ocean slime,
White-sailed, blow down the winds of time,
Immortal as the crested seas.

The *Argo*, pride of Jason's hero crew,
Full-manned, swings seaward from the Thracian shores,
And churns the calm Ægean's curling blue
To seething foam beneath her sounding oars.

And all the valiant ships that took the deep
With Atreus' sons—triremes and quinqueremes—
Still through the fishy Hellespont they sweep
As sightless Homer saw them in his dreams.

From Palos port the hardy Genoese,
His fragile caravels with sails unfurled,
Undaunted dares the unadventured seas,
And after him the commerce of the world.

And out of Plymouth roadstead, Raleigh's ship
Warps out for far Virginia under sail:
The Armada wallows in the tempest's grip,
The close-reefed canvas thundering in the gale.

Yet, on some tropic ocean, gray with years,
Full-sailed and running swift before the wind,
Manned by her crew of ghostly buccaneers,
Slips by the phantom of the *Golden Hind*.

I see them still, those fleets of ancient days,
Though far below the brine their timbers rot;
On sails and dripping oars the sunbeams blaze—
The ships whose very names have been forgot.

Against a far-off sky the vision fails;
And from a fleeting shape above the main
Drifts down upon the sea, devoid of sails,
The throbbing whisper of an aeroplane.

AN EAVESDROPPER

By Edwin Balmer

IT was five o'clock in the afternoon of a warm day in spring; and at the Illinois State Penitentiary, at Joliet, about thirty-five miles from Chicago, the prisoners who had just been pardoned were being released. Besides the four whose names had been given correctly to the papers, one other man now was being made free; he was being released instead of the fifth whose name had been printed. For someone had made a mistake in the lists of applications acted upon by the board favorably and adversely; and so instead of convict Number 8537, who had been serving ten years for arson and who was reported pardoned, convict Number 5439 was taking off his prison clothes.

The name which he was resuming was Philip Lee; and his former appearance, so far as the cheap ready-made suit given him permitted resumption of it, was that of a gentleman. He had a spare figure—not thin from starving on prison food—but of natural slenderness; his hands, though for some years now they had been performing manual tasks, were still well formed; and his pale face was handsome, with good gray eyes now very quiet—too quiet—and with lips that closed tightly together and with a chin that was firm and good. On the prison record his age was thirty-two; he was unmarried and had no one depending upon him. The crime for which he had served was embezzlement of several thousand dollars from a bank in a small city down the State; so now he was entitled to a ticket back there, but instead he asked for one to Chicago and was given it.

Of course he had known for some time that he was the Lee to be released, but

as no correction had been made publicly in the list, he had sent word to no one, not even to his brother. So as he came out there was no one to meet him; and he was glad of the mistake in the published name, except that he saw the family and friends of the other Lee still watching and waiting before the doors, though some time before they had been told of the error.

Philip Lee took a different train from the other four convicts freed, and reached Chicago alone and, so far as he could tell, with no one watching him. He had had a good dinner at noon, and as it was little later than six there was nothing and no one to stop his thinking about the man who, he knew, had committed the crime for which he had served sentence, and about the girl—or the woman who had been a girl and had been engaged to marry him—whom that other man now had as his wife.

They were in Chicago at last reports. The convict possessed their address; he verified it by a telephone directory in a cigar store and started to take a car, but then he decided to walk. He did not want to arrive before he knew exactly what he was going to do. They must be believing that he had at least a year more in the penitentiary, and that if he were released they would know it. But now he was free without the possibility of their hearing of it; this was the only possible situation which he had not thought out to the last detail during the years in his cell. He was sure it gave him a peculiar advantage, which he determined to use to its fullest in his vengeance; but the prison, with its interminable time to think, had taught him that going over a plan once more often per-

fecting it astonishingly; yet, if he delayed too long, the papers would have the truth of his release and his present advantage would be gone. He leaped on to a northbound car, and reaching the proper cross street, almost ran the two blocks till he found the right number and stopped before the house.

If Brampton had come to the house at that moment, or out of it, the convict knew that he would kill him—not with a weapon, for he had none, but with his bare hands as he had practised a thousand times in the dark of his cell while lying sleepless on his cot. Killing Brampton at once in that way was really not a part of any of Lee's plans; it merely was what he must have done if Brampton had appeared then.

The first sight of the house, large, handsome and luxurious, had made that certain; there was a drive on one side which led to a garage, where Lee could see a shining limousine with a chauffeur making ready. Evidently Brampton and his wife were about to go out. Lee left the north side of the house and returned to the front, and saw that the light now was turned on in the drawing room. It had a large and low window, evidently set in a recess, and with heavy velvet hangings before it which billowed in with the warm evening breeze; voices—a voice which filled the convict with terrible rage, and then another voice, came from the room. Lee leaped up and caught the window sill and drew himself up and within, behind the curtains. The voices continued, and he crouched, in suspense, to make certain whose they were.

"Why did you say," the woman's voice complained petulantly, "do we stick at home tonight?"

"I don't feel like going out," Brampton returned. There was a grunt and the sound of a heavy figure sinking into a deep upholstered lounge.

"I do," said the woman's voice. At first the eavesdropper had not been sure of it; but now he knew it must be Lucy's. A butler came into the room.

"You will have coffee now, sir?"

"What do I care?" Brampton said.

"Very good, sir."

"I'll have coffee, Wallace."

Again it was the woman's voice. The convict behind the curtain recognized it dully. Daily, almost hourly, throughout his years in jail, he had tried to forecast his feeling the first time he should hear her voice again; that those feelings did not come to him now he explained by the circumstance that now she was speaking to Brampton; that was the way she should address him.

"The dumps all through dinner and your rotten temper of course give me an exciting evening—without saying what it's doing to your digestion."

"You should worry about my digestion! Nothing I do has anything on having to sit and see you peck at this and peck at that and then send everything off for fear it will put more weight on you—and all the time you're stuffing on the sly, as if what you ate when I'm not looking wouldn't make you fatter."

"Pig!" Lucy returned heartily.

The eavesdropper had parted the curtains so he could see into the room. Brampton was directly opposite the window. He was, as Lee had supposed, on the lounge, but now he was sitting up. "Pig" fairly described him; his figure was fat; his feet were fat; his hand, which fumbled for his heavy tortoise-shell-rimmed *pince-nez*, was very fat; he stuck his glasses on his pudgy nose and had to hold them to keep them there.

"What's hit you since six o'clock?" Lucy inquired. She was still out of sight in another part of the room.

"Nothing," he lied obviously.

"Tell me this before you get drunk."

"All right. Lee called me up."

The convict, who had started further into the room, drew back in his surprise.

"Lee?" Lucy cried. Why should his name scare her so?

"You have it. L-e-e, Lee."

"Phil?" It was more than a scare.

"How could it be Phil?" Brampton returned.

"Then who?"

"Richard."

"Richard! What for?"

The eavesdropper, too, held in sus-

pense to hear. Richard was his older brother and lived in the city.

"How should I know?"

"What did he say?"

"He couldn't say it over the 'phone."

"So you—"

"Told him to come here."

"Here?"

"He said he was coming."

The butler had come back with the coffee. Lee could see Brampton snatch his cup from the tray and drink the coffee black. The butler disappeared to the other side of the room. Evidently Lucy delayed over the sweetening of her cup.

"Oh, take the sugar! Take the sugar!" Brampton jeered her. "Whiskey," he ordered suddenly. "Before you bring that man in."

The eavesdropper was conscious then that a bell had rung somewhere back in the house. There was a click of glass; Brampton drank, and Lee heard his brother's voice.

That told him it was too late to do what he had come there for—whatever that was. Upon almost every visiting day at the penitentiary he had spoken with his brother and had shaken hands. He had never thought of that voice thrilling him when he should hear it after he was free; but strangely now, and though his brother was talking to another, the tones swelled the pulse in Phil's throat and seemed to draw him further into the room; but he closed the curtains before him and waited. He had missed what first was said when his brother came in; Brampton, too, was confused.

"What did you say?" Brampton was demanding.

"I said I came about Phil."

"What about him?"

"He was pardoned this afternoon."

"What!"

"I said he was pardoned."

"Pardoned!" The cry came from Lucy on the other side of the room.

"And released this afternoon," Richard Lee finished.

"It's a lie!" Brampton bawled, and then suddenly lost his voice. "I saw the lists; I always look at them. They

refused his application. It was another Lee they let go."

"That was a mistake," the convict heard his brother correct. Apparently he had a newspaper, and was showing it to the woman on the other side of the room.

The pardoned man could see Brampton plainly as he stared toward the other two; he was licking his lips and his hands hung at his side, twitching; his pale, near-sighted eyes were bleared. The convict's coming from behind the curtain at that moment could only take away from that terror. He crouched back and watched it.

"What's that to do with me?" Brampton was mumbling. "What's that to do with me?"

"If you know you didn't take the money Phil's done time for, you know he's nothing against you. You're the only man in the world that knows that besides Phil. But if you did—"

"You mean he's coming here?"

"You knew Phil," the brother returned simply.

"What shall I do?" Brampton was begging.

"Do? Get out!"

"Where? When?"

"Wherever you want; but get out now. He was let out at five. Joliet's not an hour away—"

"At five! Good Lord!"

The eavesdropper could not move. In all his days and nights in jail he had not dreamt of seeing this. Brampton, staggering like a man heavily struck, lurched out of his line of sight. There was a bluster, a bawl, a woman's shriek, her cry of contempt and fear. Then the eavesdropper knew that Brampton was gone, and he was creeping beyond the angle of the recess to make sure and to follow, when he heard his brother's voice again and the woman's answering, and he waited.

"How long have you known Brampton did that?" the first was demanding.

"How long?"

"I asked that."

"Since we were married."

"You've known since Phil went to jail he was serving for what Brampton did?"

She did not answer.

"Listen. Phil's spoken about you every time I've seen him. To get out has meant to him to get back at Brampton and to get you back."

"Get me back?"

"He thought you believed he did it; he could understand that, with the evidence against him the way it was. He said he saw how the horror of his conviction and going to the penitentiary must have numbed you—that's the way he put it. And so you could marry Brampton."

"But now!"

"Brampton seems to have left you."

"And Phil's out!"

"Phil is certainly out."

"And you think he's coming here?"

"Brampton seemed to think so. The last time I saw Phil he said I could trust him not to kill Brampton."

"But you couldn't?"

"I thought Brampton had better have the chance to get out of the way."

"Then me? What about me? I've thought every day of what might happen if he'd escape. In another year he'd be out anyway. But—I don't know what to do! Tell me what to say to him!"

"What for?"

"To be safe! Anything, to be safe! I—"

The eavesdropper had come further into the room, and now for the first time saw the woman. She did not see him. Her eyes were on his brother, and his brother, watching her, did not see him either. But the convict saw her clearly—her face strangely heavy, un-

healthy, the mass of hair now not her own, the tremble of the terror in which she had lived. And the eavesdropper, seeing her, slipped back to his window, and from it lowered himself and dropped noiselessly to the walk.

Two hours later, when Richard Lee returned to his home, he found his brother who that afternoon had been released from state's prison, awaiting him in the smoking room.

"You've heard what's happened?" Richard Lee greeted Philip excitedly. "Of course you haven't. How long have you been here?"

"Since about eight."

"Then listen. When you didn't come here at once—I called up Joliet and found you'd taken a ticket to Chicago—I thought maybe you'd be crazy enough to go around to Brampton's. I told 'em you were out, and Brampton skipped. The chauffeur was taking him down to some station, when the car was held up in the traffic. According to the man—and others about—Brampton yelled to him to go on, because he saw someone beside the car. The man couldn't stop at once, so Brampton jumped out, and was hit by a machine going the other way. Fractured skull; they brought him home to die."

"What!" said Phil.

"So that, with what went before, got Lucy excited. She made a confession that Brampton did it. It can't help but clear you now."

"I wonder," said Philip Lee, "how many times before Brampton thought he saw me beside his car?"



FOR a woman to risk all for her physical children is heroism; for her spiritual children—scandal.



IF you expect gratitude, don't do more than one favor to one person.

THE FINER SENSIBILITIES

By Fleta Campbell Springer

I SEE, now that it is too late, that I should have told. Yet if it were to do again, I am not sure, even after what has happened, that I should have the courage to betray the confidence of a woman like Berthe Holman. I wish she had not told me. The whole affair, as everyone else sees it, is so much more probable, so much more normal and complete, than the truth could ever be made to appear. There have been moments today when I have listened to Holman's tense, rather high-pitched voice going over so logically and coherently, it seemed, all the details that led up to yesterday's tragic dénouement, that I have been almost convinced that he is right. Yet the events are so fresh in my memory, so vivid.

It was during the week I spent at their place at Hempstead. Both Berthe and Holman had been friends of mine before their marriage—before, in fact, they had met each other. Consequently I had seen a good deal of them, and held a place of more or less honor in the family. It was one of those marriages that seemed to have been meant from the beginning. Everyone said they were made for each other; and indeed, to see them together, it seemed that they were. They had both been reared in homes of wealth and culture; both were just enough above average height to distinguish them in any company, both slender and well poised, both fair and gray-eyed, though his hair and complexion were just the right degree darker than hers, and his eyes shaded less to blue than hers. Each was handsome in an unusual, arresting sort of way, and I always had the feeling that they were both, mentally and physically, of

the very finest texture. The home they set up was the most charming I have ever visited, and their manner toward each other was marked by that exquisite courtesy that runs as smoothly as if it had been rehearsed.

I had been more than usually busy, so that, though the summer was well along, I had not yet left the city, and when Holman's cordial note came, insisting that I come down for "at least a week," the temptation of a few days of their delightful company made me reply at once that I should be there by the afternoon train on Friday.

It was after five when I arrived, so that I went at once to dress, and it was not until dinner that I met the other guests. It was a very small party, two young nieces of Berthe's, a Mr. and Mrs. Tarsney, and Miss Virginia Treadwell, a lovely Oriental-looking girl whom I remembered having met at the Holmans' in town.

As the young girls and Mr. and Mrs. Tarsney were leaving the following morning, the talk turned a good deal to reminiscences of their stay at the house. I gathered that they had been having the most enjoyable sort of times together; the Tarsneys seemed to dislike breaking away, and the two girls, whenever they thought of going, became almost melancholy. For myself, I was not sorry to see them go, for then I should see more of my friends. As for Miss Treadwell, both Berthe and Holman seemed so genuinely fond of her, and she so congenial in every possible way, that I looked forward to a week of unalloyed pleasure.

It was not until the second evening just after dinner that I noticed anything

unusual in Berthe's manner. I had gone out onto the veranda alone, and through the long open windows I saw Berthe come into the drawing room. She stood for a moment evidently in deep thought, and then I saw her raise her head quickly, appear to listen for a moment; a queer look that puzzled me crossed her face, and she gathered up her long gown from the front and went softly and hurriedly out through a side door. Directly after that Holman and Virginia came into the room. Holman looked about.

"I thought Berthe came in here," he said.

"She started this way; perhaps she is on the veranda," she answered, and they both went out evidently in search of Berthe. Afterward all three came around to where I was, apparently happy and in the best of spirits.

It was, to be sure, no more than the merest incident, and it may be because its meaning was so soon to be made plain to me that I give it significance now. Yet certain it is that I retain a most vivid picture of Berthe's face at that moment, and that it was the beginning of my belief that a change had come over her.

The next morning at breakfast I tried to tell myself that it was the bright light that gave that curious hard expression to her fine gray eyes, yet it was still there when we went for a drive in the coolest part of the long shadowy twilight.

Despite the fact that she continued as gay as I had ever known her, was never preoccupied, and displayed the same interest in things and people, it all seemed rather the result of habit than any spontaneous impulse, and I was conscious of a feeling that there was about her an aloofness, as of a person who suffers a high nervous tension.

All of these things were vague, indefinite, trivial and out of all proportion to the impression they made upon me. Yet I was wholly unprepared for the revelation that came so suddenly on Wednesday morning.

Berthe had arranged to take Virginia to Three Cliffs, a place of some historical connection or other, and at the last

moment remembered that she had something to do which could not be neglected, and suggested that Holman ride over with Virginia in her stead.

Shortly after they had gone, I betook myself with a book to the coolest corner of the library, thinking to leave Berthe free to attend to her duties. I had been reading for probably fifteen minutes when I became conscious of someone pacing up and down, up and down, out of sight in the adjoining room. I listened. For a long while it kept up, then the steps turned, midway, and I saw Berthe coming across the hall to the library. It was abundantly evident that she was unaware of my presence. Her head was high, her nostrils distended, the line of her mouth was hard and set; and she strode rather than walked, impatiently, straight ahead, as one whose whole being, mind and soul and body, were leagued together in some violent rebellion. It was her eyes that gave me the shock. They were hard as steel, and the light in them was positively wild! She came straight on, and then, suddenly, she saw me. She whirled, and for an instant I thought she was about to flee from the room; then she faced me again as suddenly. There was no change in her expression as she spoke; her voice tense, cold, higher-pitched than usual.

"May I talk to you, Richard? Will you let me tell you?"

I was too astonished to speak. It was so unlike her, an outbreak of this sort.

"Why—why, certainly, Berthe—certainly," I stammered. She ignored my confusion, and went on.

"Now—while they are gone—I must tell. It may come straight in the telling; things do, you know." Her eyes sought mine, yet seemed not to see me, and I knew that her need of speech was past her own strength to control.

"What is it?" I said. "You are in trouble?"

"I can *not* go on living with Harry Holman!" She came a step nearer.

"Please, please, don't ask me what he has done. There is absolutely no reason, yet I despise him—despise him so that if I must go on living with him here—in this house—his house"—her hands

made quick, nervous, comprehensive gestures—"I think I shall simply—die."

"Berthel!" I cried. "Berthel!"

"I know—I know!" She swept aside my interjection. "But may a woman not hate with as little reason as she loves? Must there always be *reason* for hate? One is never asked one's reason for loving! But you—yes, you are going to look for my motive—I can see that—but only listen, and then you must think whatever you will; only, believe me, Richard, what I say is true—I am concealing nothing."

I knew what it was costing her to say such things. Her words seemed veritably to tear through the fine fabric of her reserve and inflict physical pain.

"And Harry?" I forced myself to ask.

She smiled—a drawn, painful, satirical smile. "Can't you see?" she said. "Harry has *done* nothing, so why should he suspect? He is all I could ask in a husband, gentle, devoted, considerate—and yet—oh, how can I expect you to understand when I myself can't understand? I only know that it is so; it has gone on so long now that I feel as if the mere knowledge must stifle me; every day I think he must see, every day I wonder that he has not seen—and it is that thought that is killing me. You know how fine he is, how honest and straightforward and incapable of deception he is; and you know his faith in me—in my love—"

"Yet he must know sooner or later—you must see that," I said, as gently as I might, for I knew that so far as Berthe was concerned the end of her happiness had come. She was not the woman to reach such a conclusion without much struggle.

"Ah, but he *must not* find it out! I must prevent that. I will not be guilty of *that*! I believe it would kill Harry if he should discover this. He has been so careful of our love; he has held it so high. He would never understand such grossness, such unnecessary grossness. He is not like most men—has never been. I think I have never known a man of such fine sensibilities. I cannot inflict that suffering upon him. I have

thought if only he might fall in love with someone else—"

"Berthel!" I gasped, but she hurried on.

"Unconsciously—as this has come over me—then it would not hurt him so much. I have made friends with the most fascinating women—have invited them to our house—yet Harry has seen no one but me. He expressed admiration for Virginia Treadwell—I asked her to come here for a month. I have made myself as unattractive as possible. She is so vital, full of color, life, everything that fascinates men; I made myself the opposite. I was listless, pale, dowdy; why, think of it—one often hears of women putting on beautiful things to attract some man, to gain his love, but I—I actually bought, selected and bought, at greater pains than I ever took in such things before, hideous, unbecoming things to make myself colorless, ugly—to make him see how unattractive I was. I pretended to lose interest in things he likes; he gave them up without a word. But Virginia—she is beautiful; I have left them alone as much as possible; they have tastes in common; I have contrived that they might cultivate them together; and yet you have seen—he grows more devoted to me every day! What an inconsistent God it was who made us! He enjoys having her here because it is a pleasure to *me*! Oh, he admires her, but when I leave the room he follows me, makes excuses to be alone with me, compliments me in her presence. Scheme as I may, I cannot leave them alone except, as today, he may be doing me a favor."

I suppose unconsciously I had been shaking my head, for she looked at me sharply, quizzically.

"Oh, you may shake your head, but a month is a long time, and surely before the month is gone—she is not only beautiful, you know, she is so rich in everything I have not—so different; and I shall make myself dreadful—surely it cannot fail! He must—" The sound of horses' hoofs on the drive outside interrupted her. She caught it instantly.

"They have come back," she said, and then, with a sudden impulse, as if

now for the first time she consciously addressed me: "Don't let this spoil your stay, will you? I only told you—because, because—it was *necessary* for me to speak of it to someone."

Again I had the sense of her aloofness, of her hopeless conflict with some unseen, powerful foe. There was no time to assure her of my sympathy, and had there been I could never have found the words, for Berthe was not the sort of woman one offers sympathy—one might offer help, if she asked it, but not exactly sympathy. I had only time to hold out my hand to her and say lamely: "If there is any way I can help—"

"You have helped me more than you know already," she said, her cold hand touching mine for an instant. Then she was gone, and the next moment I heard her chatting and laughing with Holman and Virginia as they all three came up the side path together.

From that time until the end of my stay, Berthe did not again refer to what she had told me. I could see at once that all she had said was true, pitifully true, and, it seemed, hopeless. Her efforts, apparent enough to me now, to leave Holman and Virginia alone together, seemed invariably to fail, for Holman showed in every possible way that for him Berthe was, as she would always be, the one woman. He seemed to fall more deeply in love with her every day, to care more to be near her.

I could see that Berthe suffered, unreasonable mental and physical suffering; the steely look in her eyes hardened, a metallic note crept into her laughter. When Holman came near her, laid his hand on her arm, I saw the almost imperceptible shrinking of her flesh. She was making herself as unattractive as it was within her power to do—she was pale, all the warmth had gone out of her flesh, yet her paleness grew dazzling white—she was like a frozen woman.

And Virginia Treadwell was, as she had said, unmistakably beautiful, with her brown-black eyes, her sensitive red lips and the rich glow of blood beneath the soft olive of her skin. Her heavy hair was straight, and of a curious rusty black, and, though she coiled it about

her head in the very simplest fashion, it always suggested how wonderful it must be hanging loose. It was beautiful hair. And about the plainest thing she wore there was invariably the effect of something barbaric. She combined the languorous grace of the East with an alert brilliancy of perception that is as charming as it is rare. I watched her closely, as, indeed, I did the three of them. The problem was with me constantly, and I came finally to the conclusion that if Harry Holman had met Virginia Treadwell before he knew Berthe, they might have fallen in love. They shared so many tastes in common, and I could not help thinking what a striking couple they would have made—he a perfect type of the Occident, she of the Orient.

My week came to an end, and I returned to town, reluctantly, I must confess, for I cared a great deal for both Holman and Berthe, and it was not easy to leave them, knowing what I did. They were expecting other guests the following week, and I hoped they would prove some diversion or distraction for Berthe. For days after I came back to town I could not rid myself of the memory of her white, tortured face.

That was four weeks ago—only four weeks—and yesterday came the telegram from Holman, and then the papers with the account.

Berthe Holman had killed herself.

I was at breakfast. The news staggered me, stunned every sense. I could only stare blindly at the words on the yellow paper. My mind rejected the reality. And then, like an avalanche, the truth descended upon me.

The papers could only conjecture—temporary insanity, accident—she had left no word, and save for myself no living person knew—would ever know—the reason for Berthe Holman's suicide. When, after half an hour, I was able to think more or less coherently, I seemed in an inverted sort of way to glory in the courage of the woman. She had played out the game to the end; she had not let him see.

Holman's message informed me that

he would be at my rooms at ten o'clock this morning.

It is now one o'clock. He has just left me. It was early when he arrived, a few minutes before ten. I met him at the door, and when I saw him I could scarcely believe it was Holman who stood before me. He was changed past all belief; he seemed on the verge of collapse. I brought him in here to this room, and he walked over to the window there and stood looking down into the street, like a somnambulist. He seemed incredibly shrunken; his eyes had sunk back into the sockets; all the life seemed to have fled from the man. It came over me suddenly, with a shock, how much he had loved her, what this meant to him; and I realized that my thoughts had been more of Berthe than of him.

Then abruptly he spoke, without turning his head.

"I have come here to tell you, Richard, why Berthe killed herself."

"What!" I almost shouted. "You know that?"

He faced me then, his eyes dull and despairing. A fierce revulsion of feeling came over me against Berthe. She had been so weak, then, as to tell him! I was unspeakably sorry for him.

"Yes," he said, controlling his voice with a visible effort, "they're all wrong, their conjectures—they know nothing." He indicated the morning papers that strewed the floor and table. His look, and the quick, nervous gestures, reminded me vividly of Berthe that day in the library; the two were very much alike in many ways.

"I left her down there and came up here to tell you. You were her friend as well as mine, and you must help me keep it, in justice to her. Richard, you thought ours was a perfect marriage, that we were all we could be to each other. Well, *Berthe killed herself when she discovered that I loved another woman.*"

I was dumb with amazement.

"Ah, even you never so much as suspected! And you saw us together, day after day, in the same house. No one knew. I crushed it, trampled it, but it

would not die! Why did she bring her there, into the very house with me? No woman should believe like that in a man. I was her husband—I loved her—and therefore I was above suspicion! And then she loved me—you saw how she loved me; she was proud of her love, proud of being my wife! God, that is what kills me now—her love and her belief! I forced myself to be more attentive than ever to Berthe. I avoided the other—I prayed that she might go—but Berthe kept her—kept her endlessly. So long as she was near me I was powerless. Oh, if Berthe had not been so secure in her love! If only she had been jealous, if she had watched when I looked at the other woman! Friendship, love—those are things not to be trifled with. There are rules, but who can obey them? And the woman—she loved me, too; I knew that in a thousand ways; she was as powerless as I. Perhaps Berthe was the finer—but I *loved* the other! You saw how well I kept it hid—you will give me credit for that—"

His words rushed precipitately, as if he would make a clean breast of the whole story before he stopped for breath. My thoughts were a chaos. What could it mean? I wanted to get at the truth.

"But Berthe—how did she discover it?" I interrupted him to ask.

"There could have been only one way. I will tell you all I know—as it occurred. It was the night before last—Virginia was to leave the next morning. I was under constant care not to say or do anything to betray what I felt. But who can say—perhaps—involuntarily—I don't know. We were all merry at dinner—Berthe was happier and gayer than she had been for some time; afterward we sat out under the trees.

"I talked as little as possible to Virginia—I wanted that last night to be my supreme effort, for it was necessary; after that perhaps I might regain my sanity. I was more than ever tender and attentive to Berthe—and all the time I wanted to take Virginia into my arms and hold her there, against right, against decency, against even Berthe's love! It was madness, and yet I con-

quered—I must deserve some credit for that; I conquered that desire, and it was stronger almost than life itself. And then—Berthe said she must leave us alone for a little while—that there was something she must attend to inside. I pleaded with her to stay—I felt that she must not leave us there alone that last night. Virginia, too, begged her to stay. But she would go in spite of us both—and I knew when she went that it would be fatal. Five minutes afterward my hand touched Virginia's unexpectedly—and the next instant she was in my arms. Only an instant, after all those weeks—but it was that instant that Berthe must have been watching, for twenty minutes later the servants came to find me. Now—you know everything—"His voice stopped, cutting off sharply in midair.

What prompted the question then I do not know, but I asked almost involuntarily: "And Miss Treadwell?"

"She?" His voice quickened as he spoke of her. "She went away early

this morning. Nothing was said between us—nothing could have been; but when she said good-bye I think we both understood it was forever. It is a terrible thought—but I know the same thing was in both our minds—that we were veritably guilty of Berthe's death! Our love had murdered her. I wanted, with all my strength, to save her that—as much almost as I wanted to spare Berthe the knowledge of my baseness. Women are not made for shocks like that—they are too delicate—they have finer sensibilities than men. Men, Richard—men are gross, coarse-fibered through to the very soul and out again—for even now I cannot convince myself that my love for her is entirely dead!"

He has been gone an hour. He went away much calmer than when he came. There were moments when I struggled with an almost uncontrollable desire to tell him—but I am thankful that I did not give way to it. It is best, perhaps, as it is.



THE GHOST

By Elizabeth Roberts MacDonald

AS soft as the sound of a flute
Blown low in a garden of roses,
The gray river runs to the sea,
The gray gate of twilight uncloses.

So glides the pale ghost of your love
Through failure and strife and regretting,
Like rose scent and music and dusk
And all things too dear for forgetting.



SUCCESS comes sometimes to those who deserve it, and they often get more than they deserve. Sometimes success comes to those who don't deserve it, but they often get their deserts.

A GOOD INFLUENCE

By Freeman Tilden

WHEN the city authorities laid out Jackson Park, they thoughtfully included a baseball diamond "for the little ones." I have never seen the "little ones" playing on that diamond; but time and time I have sat under a nearby tree, summer afternoons, and watched the Shiny Cups playing the Rusty Dippers.

I like to see the Shiny Cups playing the Rusty Dippers. I would rather view a game between the Shiny Cups and the Rusty Dippers than a post-season series in the big league.

Here is sport without the suspicion of fraud; sport that is incontestably amateur; eighteen young men, all too strong to work, ridding themselves of surplus energy, heart and soul. Neither the Shiny Cups nor the Rusty Dippers would run a city block upon a "practical" matter, though the matter concerned the fate of nations; but they will tear around the bases, chase the ball like deerhounds and comport themselves with stupendous agility all the afternoon in Jackson Park. They are what the world was when the world was young.

And Duff Cassidy was what the world was when the world was in its mere infancy. He symbolized the beginnings of human life. Duff was all action—no thought whatever; except the instinctive sort of mental activity necessary to complete a snappy double play. Duff was captain of the Rusty Dippers, and as Duff is going to be the principal figure in this narrative, I am going to give him the center of the stage, and throw the spotlight upon him.

At the moment of introduction to you, Duff is twenty years old. In another year he will be qualified to vote, at least

once, in the nineteenth ward. He has that fullness of frame and muscular development which draws from admiring members of his own social class the term "husky." A husky boy; no doubt about it. A face with good color and Irish blue eyes is topped by a poll of reddish-brown hair, with a tendency to curl. Duff cultivates this curling disposition, and wears his derby hat on the back of his head so that no tithe of the effect will be lost to admiring eyes.

Duff has all the primitive virtues and all the primitive vices. He is full of emotions and full of traditions. Thus he will gallantly escort an old woman across the traffickful street; he will try to flirt with the same old woman's daughter; and he has an envious eye to pocketbooks and unguarded suitcases. He smokes an incredible number of cigarettes, will down a gill of cut-throat whiskey in one gulp, and his talk is punctuated with violent oaths that sound bad though they mean nothing. On the other hand, he will cheerfully give away anything he possesses in response to the impulse of pity.

Duff's father was a hard-working man. His stepfather was a loafer. In some strange manner which the exponents of the theory of heredity will no doubt explain satisfactorily, Duff inherited from his stepfather rather than from his sire. At any rate, Duff was a born loafer. He was the kind of loafer that is prevented from working by sheer excess of vitality. He was the loafer premier of the neighborhood around Jackson Park. He was so utterly accomplished that, after a few misdirected attempts to seduce him from this occupation, the tradesmen and employers

ceased to dream of him as a laboring factor.

Nature had fitted Duff to be captain of the Rusty Dippers; or, in fact, leader in any unproductive diversion.

Nature had not thought of Duff Cassidy as a useful, moral or intellectual citizen.

In his sphere, Duff was a constant and consummate success. Unless you realize this, you will not understand his downfall, which began on the last day of May, 1911, with the appearance of Mrs. De Ruyter in the vicinage of Jackson Park.

Mrs. De Ruyter, on the last day of May, 1911, having nothing upon her mind except a modish Parisian bonnet, was being driven along Algonquin Avenue in her car, when she suddenly had the desire to see how the other half of the world lives. She bade her chauffeur show her this phenomenon; and he flew down a side street in the direction of Jackson Park, where Duff Cassidy was leading the Rusty Dippers to victory. Running a large motor car through this neighborhood, where race suicide has not yet begun, is a good way to see how the other half of the world dies; but the chauffeur was a careful man, and the automobile horn scared the youngest children into convulsions and thus saved their lives.

Mrs. De Ruyter was rich; but not one of the idle rich. On the contrary, her mind was alive to very many things of which it is the poor's pride to believe the rich ignorant. For one thing, she knew the fine points of baseball as well as any twelve-dollar-a-week clerk; possibly better. She was present when Cy Young and Rube Waddell pitched that sixteen-inning game. . . .

And thus she became interested in Duff Cassidy. Duff was pitching for the Rusty Dippers; and when the De Ruyter automobile glided into the background, Duff was winding up to deliver a moist ball to one of the Shiny Cups. The batter nearly dislocated his entire bone structure in fanning the air, and was declared out, and the jubilant Rusty Dippers trotted in from the field.

At this point Mrs. De Ruyter was

disturbed, but not dismayed, by having two distinct and polar ideas at once. One idea was to say to the chauffeur: "Drive to Gaillard's." This idea was associated with tea.

The other idea was to call the pitcher for the Rusty Dippers up to her motor car and talk with him. This idea was associated with a vague belief that had long lain dormant in the lady's mind, that she ought now and then do something for the lower classes. She had never known just how to proceed, to do anything for the lower classes. But she had a feeling that she really ought to be interested in such things.

Duff Cassidy, when told of this strange desire on the part of the swell lady in the automobile, grinned sheepishly at his mates and replied, "You're kiddin'."

The messenger affirmed.

"Whushy wammy for?" inquired Duff.

The messenger could not say. She just wanted to speak with "that pitcher."

"Go on, Duff," urged one of the Rusty Dippers. "There may be two bits in it. These swell skirts don't care what they do with their money."

"Tell her we need a new ball!" shouted one of the Shiny Cups.

So Duff Cassidy, with his hat removed, showing that curly reddish-brown hair, approached the automobile in what he assumed to be an air of insouciance; at the same time trying to think of a fitting speech.

The first words spoken by the lady relieved Duff of his set speech, and at the same time showed him that the lady was "all to the good." She smiled as Duff approached and saluted him: "Is your name Christy Mathewson?"

And yet some people say the capitalist class lacks tact!

Duff Cassidy blushed from ear to ear and from neck to eye. He did not know just how to reply, so he said, in an undertone, "G'wan!"

"Do you mind telling me your name?" asked the lady.

"Cassidy," murmured Duff. And then he added the word "marm," as a tender courtesy.

"And your first name?"

"John. But they call me Duff. Because—"

Mrs. De Ruyter handed him a card. "If you will call, some afternoon—say, tomorrow afternoon—perhaps I can be of some help to you. Seven-seven-five Algonquin Avenue; if you forget the number you can look it up in the directory. Don't be afraid to come; I really want you to. Shall I expect you?"

Duff, speechless, nodded. Then he bowed slightly. He caught sight of two quizzical eyes turned cautiously in his direction from the driver's seat, and the whimsy ran through his mind that he would be pleased to choke the chauffeur to death. Then he went back to the Rusty Dippers, and the motor car slid off into regions where it would feel more at home.

"How muchjer get?" bawled several of the players at once.

"Who's your friend?" drawled somebody; and a laugh went up.

From that point it did not take long for the conversation to reach a Rabelaisian tone. The lower classes read the newspapers, and suspect the upper classes in consequence.

"I can lick the guy that opens his face about that lady," shouted Duff, clenching his fists. "And I can begin right off quick."

There was no question about the honesty of this announcement. The game was renewed.

During the rest of the day, however, Duff's playing was erratic. His attention was constantly distracted by the presence of the squarish card in his pocket. Romantic notions began to swarm. If the swell dame had a daughter? . . . Was there any money in it? . . . Could they maybe introduce him to Johnny McGraw—and get him a try-out with the Giants? . . .

"What's the matter with youse, Duff?" howled the second baseman, as one of the Shiny Cups stole second while Duff dreamed. "These guys'll steal your front teeth in a minute."

"Thatsallright," replied Duff good-naturedly. "I got to thinkin' about somethin'."

Mr. De Ruyter was a hard-working man, who in the course of his brokerage business had amassed something like a million dollars and a half. Once in a while he felt the inclination to ease up a little; maybe to retire to a farm in the country; but then he would meet some man that had a million and three-quarters, and with a sigh and a sharp self-reproof, would go back to work with renewed earnestness.

When Mr. De Ruyter had looked upon the husky person of Duff Cassidy, and had heard his wife's uplift intentions, he had this to say: "Get him a new suit of clothes and tell him not to brush his hair down over his forehead, and then send him out to look for a job."

"You don't understand at all, Jack," remonstrated Mrs. De Ruyter. "The young fellow has never had a chance. I feel sure I can make something of him. What he needs is a good influence."

"I think he ought to go to work," persisted the practical man.

"I think he ought to be fitted to meet life," was the reply.

"You do just as you please, Nell," concluded the broker. "I don't say you may not find it very interesting. Perhaps you can do something with him. I don't know. If you can fit him to meet life, and let him form a large acquaintance with people with money, I can possibly use him in the office to help unload a lot of that Cobalt Bluejay we were stung with."

"I want you to take it seriously," warned Mrs. De Ruyter.

"All right; I will," was the good-natured reply. "Do as you please."

A new outfit of clothes and some money in his pocket made Duff Cassidy look like a prosperous teamster and feel like a bartender. Mrs. De Ruyter had a heart-to-heart talk with him.

"The first thing you must do, Duff," she said, "is to get as much education as possible. You are too old to do the day school, so you must go to the night school. In the daytime I want you to go to the public library and read. I shall give you tickets to good lectures and music, and those will teach you a

great deal. I am a very busy woman, Duff, with many social responsibilities, and I cannot give you as much time as I should like, but I shall expect you to report your progress to me regularly."

"Yes, marm," said Duff.

Nothing had been said in connection with a try-out with the New York Giants. But the present scheme looked so attractive to Duff that his thoughts were lifted quite above baseball. Swell folks were interested in him! He had a suit that cost thirty-five dollars, and a pair of boots that cost an even five. And he had ten dollars in his pocket and knew where to get more.

Duff registered faithfully at the evening school, and went to the public library two days in succession. On the second day he was asked to leave the periodical reading room for laughing aloud at a picture he saw in *Puck*, the tacit understanding between the library trustees and the public being that all enjoyment of the comic papers should be purely mental.

At the evening school Duff found a fellow about his own age that he instinctively felt was "all right." After school they matched for the drinks. There was also a young woman teacher that appealed to Duff's fancy. He assumed that she admired his hair, which had escaped the chastisement suggested by Mr. De Ruyter. So Duff was able to make an initial report to his benefactress that the evening school "had made a hit with him." And he permitted the swell lady to assume that he had made a hit with the evening school.

About the middle of June the De Ruyters went abroad. Mr. De Ruyter's health was bad, and he was taking that sterling old advice which has made the fortunes of many doctors—a rest. At the last moment—almost on the way to the ship—Mrs. De Ruyter stopped suddenly and exclaimed: "What in the world shall I do with Duff?"

"Take him with us," replied her husband.

"Don't jest, please, Jack. What can we do with him?"

"Turn him over to one of your friends. Why not?"

Mrs. De Ruyter considered a few moments. "I think Emmy Ralston will look after him," she said. "She's interested in that sort of thing. Poor Duff! I almost forgot him."

"That's nothing. We almost forgot Toto," said her husband pleasantly. Toto was the chow dog.

Having set her seal of disapproval on this pleasantry, Mrs. De Ruyter hastily wrote the following note to Emmy Ralston:

DEAREST EMMY:

You must do this for me. I am *simply depending* on you. Jack and I are off on the *Mauretania* today, and I am leaving Duff Cassidy with you. I will have him call on you and explain all about it. He is a very good boy and will improve *wonderfully* under a good influence. I'll write you again when we get aboard.

NELL.

At this point Mrs. De Ruyter disappears from the narrative permanently. The De Ruyters were abroad a whole year. You may be interested and gratified to know that Mr. De Ruyter recovered his nervous health, and sold a large block of J. P. & W. to a German syndicate. It is well to combine business with hygiene.

As for Emmy Ralston, she does not appear in the narrative at all. On receipt of Mrs. De Ruyter's note, she sat down to her *escritoire* and produced this missive:

MY DEAR POLLY:

You probably know that the De Ruyters sailed today. Nell, who is a dear girl but often very thoughtless, left a certain protégé of hers on my hands. As nearly as I can make out from the scrawl—isn't she the worst writer in the world!—his name is Duffy something that begins with a C and doesn't end on the sheet of paper. Now, Polly, I cannot, I simply cannot, take this person up. We go to the shore next week, and I am just as busy as I can possibly be. I am making a small financial provision for the boy, and taking the great liberty of turning him over to you, for I know that sort of thing is your specialty. You'll do it for little Emmy, won't you? By the way . . . and did you know . . .

Nor does Mrs. Ernest Wilmerding—the "Polly" referred to in the above communication—grace these pages with her person. She addressed a plea to

Mrs. Albert Scone field, in the following words:

ALICE DEAR:

I don't like to take advantage of your sweet disposition . . . man left behind by the De Ruyters . . . I know you had bad luck with your Armenian immigrant girl, but . . . I enclose a cheque to give him a little start, etc., etc.

Mrs. Scone field sighed when she read the note. She was a good-natured woman, and was, besides, under some small obligations to Mrs. Wilmerding. So, for two weeks, she guided the uncertain course of Duff Cassidy. She never actually saw Duff, but she arranged that Duff should call at the office of her husband's attorney and there receive spiritual and financial advice and refreshment. At the end of two weeks, feeling that the pressure of her routine duties forbade any further chaperonage of the young Cassidy, she turned him over to a settlement-worker of the Chauncey Street Extension.

Thus, in the course of an incredibly short time, Duff Cassidy was shot through society like a cash container through a pneumatic tube. He made the trip, without a stop, in record time. It made him a little dizzy. In three days he had enjoyed three separate matronages. Early in July he was shot out of the tube into the professional waiting arms of J. P. Wells, Jr., of the Chauncey Street Settlement.

J. P. Wells, Jr., was a young man—hardly the senior of Duff Cassidy—in whom ideals had matured early. He was one of a group of trained young persons whose object was to lighten the hearts of the millions. It was understood that what the millions needed was joy and improvement and the Chauncey Street "workers" had been so industrious that at the time Duff came under their care, joy and improvement were as common as pawn tickets. Improvers and improved mingled on terms of delightful equality; class distinctions were utterly wiped away; and the only way to distinguish the settlement-workers from the settlement-worked would have been by an X-ray examination of their stomachs and pocketbooks.

The "workers" were a merry crew of

enthusiasts, to whom every calendar day brought new adventure. The work was undoubtedly full of romance. Among the "workers" love matches were the rule. The constant excitement of doing something for somebody, and the knowledge that two persons could do more for somebody than one, furnished details for many a union that was neatly described in the headlines as a "pretty settlement romance."

J. P. Wells, Jr., greeted Duff Cassidy with a smile and outstretched hand. His first tones were calculated to convince Duff that he (J. P. W., Jr.) thought him (Duff) just as good as he (J. P. W., Jr.) was. Possibly the young "worker" did not take into consideration the possibility that Duff thought himself a little better than anybody he had ever met.

"I'm mighty glad to see you, Cassidy," said the worker. "I know we're going to get along fine together. You've been described to me as a young fellow anxious to get ahead and make something of yourself. You can count on our help in every way."

Duff smiled grimly, and pumped the other youth's arm with abandon. "Did Missus De Ruyter tell you about me?" he asked.

"Er—Mrs. De Ruyter? No; the lady's name was Scone field."

"Oh, well, it's all the same," replied Duff easily, taking a package of cheap cigarettes from his pocket and offering one. "I know all those swell dames. Mrs. De Ruyter seen me pitching—"

You could scarcely blame Mr. Wells for being a little bit hurt at the self-confident manner of Mr. Cassidy. A young man asking for help—in desperate need, in fact, of joy and improvement—ought to show a reasonable amount of humility. But the worker shook his head in negation of cigarettes, and replied: "I don't think I ever met Mrs. De Ruyter."

"Prob'ly not," replied Duff. "She's a bear, though. She seen me throwin' my spitter—"

"Your—pardon me?"

"Spitball. You do like this, and hold the ball like this—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Mr. Wells. "I'd like to hear all about that later. Won't you come in now and register, and enroll yourself in some of the courses—"

"Mrs. De Ruyter was preparin' me for collidge," announced Duff, still bent on making himself loom large in the foreground of the conversation.

"Ah!" replied Mr. Wells, trying not to show any skepticism. The fundamental rule for getting along with settlement candidates is not to argue or quarrel with them.

"Sure thing," continued Duff. "And there was talk about adoppin' me." A silence. Then Duff added: "This here suit cost fifty dollars."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Wells, in what would have been a fatal excess of admiration if Duff had been more understanding than he was. "Now, Cassidy, if you'll come in and sit down a while, we'll discuss the prospects. Are you—er—working at present?"

"Nix," replied Duff. "I'm gettin' a education."

"But the money question?"

"Huh! Mrs. De Ruyter is puttin' up the coin. Ever sin't she seen me pitchin'—"

"Will you step this way, Cassidy?" said Mr. Wells briskly.

"This guy's nutty," said Duff to himself as they went into the executive office. "He wants to do all the talkin'."

Duff was left alone for a short time while Mr. Wells went into the telephone cabinet. After a while the worker came out with a smile of enlightenment. "I understand the circumstances now, Cassidy," he said. "I've been talking with Mrs. Scone field. It seems you've been having quite an adventure, haven't you? I'm glad for your sake you fell in with such kindly people. I tell you, Cassidy, there's more real downright good in the rich than they're often given credit for."

"But the case as it stands is something like this: Mrs. De Ruyter has gone to Europe, and Mrs. Scone field is going to be so very busy, that you have been turned over to us. I'm afraid your—salary, or whatever it was, won't con-

tinue. You see, our idea is that, so far as possible, our young men and women should be self-supporting. We quarrel somewhat with the old idea of charity, which—"

"Lemme git you right," said Duff. "Ain't Mrs. De Ruyter goin' to put up no more stuff for my education?"

"I believe not, Cassidy. You see—"

"How do I know you ain't framin' this up on me?" cried Duff, with a choking sensation of disappointment, and a gleam of suspicion in his eyes. "I'll believe it when I get it from Mrs. De Ruyter."

"I can let you talk with Mrs. Scone field," said Wells soothingly. "As I said, the other lady is in Europe."

There was something convincing about the worker's manner and tone. Duff stared at the floor a few moments, and then forced a grin. "Canned!" he said.

"But I don't understand that the lady's interest in you is gone," continued Mr. Wells. "On the contrary, Cassidy, I think if you go to work and go to the night school and improve your time, she'll be very much pleased when she gets back."

"Is that right?" asked Duff, with renewed interest.

"I really think so. Where did you work last, Cassidy?"

Duff sat up straight and tried to think quickly. He couldn't remember any work that he had done except errands for Schmucke the delicatessen man, some five years ago. "I was clerk in a store," he announced.

Mr. Wells produced a menacing pad of paper and pencil. "What store was that?"

"It burned down a short while ago," replied Duff promptly.

"You could probably find the man that ran it?"

"He moved away," was the answer. And then, to be on the safe side, Duff added: "It was a small store. I was the only clerk."

"You're well built," said Mr. Wells; "very strong, I suppose?"

"Sure thing," replied Duff.

"We could probably place you somewhere in a shipping department," the

worker hazarded. "Would you like that?"

"I guess so," replied Duff dully.

They got him a job rustling packing cases in a wholesale oyster house. The salary was six dollars a week to start; and the position was one of those that uses up a number of years in starting. But it was all the same to Duff. Civilization had reached out, through the long arm of the Chauncey Street Settlement, and collared Duff Cassidy and put him to work. Duff's splendid idleness had reeked in the nostrils of a hard-working world long enough. There is no longer any appreciation of fine loafing. Duff went to work.

Duff went to work with a protest, but he went to work. The fact was, he was a little bit frightened. He had suddenly had the feeling of poverty.

When Duff was spending his time as leading spirit of the Rusty Dippers he had not felt poor; though he was hard put to it for cigarette money at times, particularly when his stepfather had been first to meet Mrs. Cassidy on her return from a scrubbing job. There were days when he had had only a few nickels. But he had not felt poor. On the contrary, he had been lord of all he surveyed.

Now he felt that all the luxuries of life had been subtracted from him. He had a good suit of clothes and six dollars a week in prospect. It looked like slavery.

There was a man at the shipping desk that acted like a czar. He bossed Duff around as though he owned him. He said "Here, you!" to him. To Duff Cassidy, well known on Algonquin Avenue! If any of the Rusty Dippers or Shiny Cups had said "Here, you!" like that, to Duff, there would have been a quick combat. But this man was somewhat. This was a man in obvious authority, backed by a vague syndicate of power and probably by the police. When Duff was attracted from the warehouse by passing fire engines, and detained by the progress of a nearby fire, this satrap actually called Duff vile names. Duff's blood boiled. But there

was something the matter with him; he couldn't say anything in retort.

Five weeks Duff rustled cases of oysters, and then he drifted away one Saturday morning after receiving his wages, and promised himself never to return any more.

Duff forgot the uplifters at the settlement. He had not reckoned on their zeal for giving him joy and improvement. They came after him and landed him—not in the oyster house, because the people there wouldn't take him back anyway—but in a coal and wood yard, where he could make himself happy in contemplation of studies in black and white. And Duff went to work again. He wanted to run. He wanted to fight. He wanted to go back to the diamond on Jackson Park playground and shoot over a few fast ones. But something had him in its grip. He felt poor. He felt the necessity of living up to his suit of clothes.

The settlement people yearned to make Duff useful, honorable and above all diligent. They had a laudable desire to be able to say, some day, pointing to Duff: "That's one of our boys. When we took hold of him— And now look at him!"

Duff was detected pitching lumps of coal at a telegraph pole, and was promptly fired, after one week. Fired, yes; in spite of the fact that he had hit the pole seventeen times out of thirty shots, showing really wonderful "control."

Duff was also released by an express company, by a livery stable and a cheap restaurant. Then the settlement gave him up. He had demonstrated that he did not care enough about joy and improvement to do the right thing. In the restaurant he spilled a large dish of something on his thirty-five-dollar suit, and this cut him off definitely from the Algonquin Avenue class. Then he went back to Jackson Park.

Duff got back to Jackson Park one afternoon in the early autumn and sauntered out on the field, looking very much as he had looked when Fate in

her motor car had come to whisk him away.

"Here's Duff!" cried the Rusty Dippers and the Shiny Cups.

"How's the food at the Waldorf?" shouted somebody.

"Put on your kid gloves, Duff!" advised a Rusty Dipper.

"Parley-voo fransay?" offered a linguistic ball player.

"Quit yer kiddin'!" said Duff. "Lemme take a hand."

"We got a feller now that can pitch all round you, Duff," said a Shiny Cup, with great satisfaction. Many's the time Duff had "fanned" this lad.

"Kin he?" replied Duff, not much disturbed.

"He's a regular Rube Marquard," persisted the tormentor.

"Is he?" replied Duff. "I'll make him look like a piker. Grab that mitt, Wally, while I warm up."

Duff wound up and started with a fast, straight ball that plunked into the mitt very comfortably. Then he varied with a few curves. "Whatd'yer think, Wally?" he yelled.

"Pretty fair, Duff. Only, they ain't got quite the old steam."

What follows is very painful to write. There is nothing so pitiful as the fall of an idol. The first day Duff pitched for the Rusty Dippers they batted him all over the lot. Score: Shiny Cups 27, Rusty Dippers 3. Duff struck out three times out of four.

The next day, owing to fast fielding by Duff's supporters, the Shiny Cups made only eighteen runs to six.

The third day, in the middle of the game, after Duff had passed five men in succession, the catcher of the Rusty Dippers threw his mitt into the dust and sat down. "Back to the Waldorf, Duff!" he yelled. "Back to Delmonico's! You can't pitch any more than a drunken sailor. These here guys'll break all the bats on your stuff. Back to the bench!"

"I'm a little off today," confessed Duff. "But I'll come round all right."

"You're a dead one," replied the catcher, hugging his knees. "My sister could hit you. The bush league for

youse, Duff. Let the real pitcher have a show." He pointed to the "regular Rube Marquard," that had usurped Duff's place in the Park.

"Git up and lemme have a show," begged Duff.

"Back to the bush!" cried all the Rusty Dippers and Shiny Cups.

Duff dropped the ball in the pitcher's box and started for the open space back of the catcher. He sat down and watched the new idol step confidently into his place. He watched him strike out two Shiny Cups in succession and force the third to an easy out. Then his head felt light, and he got up and met the new pitcher as he walked in toward the place.

"You think you're the goods, don't yer?" said Duff to him. "I've a good min' to knock yer block off."

Whether Duff really intended any offensive movement is not to the point. The real point is that the new pitcher did not await that contingency. He landed squarely on Duff's jaw and knocked him out as cleanly as the thing was ever done in the region of Jackson Park. When Duff came to, he was on his back looking up at the blue sky. It took him a minute or two to sense the situation. Then he said: "I ain't right these days."

The Rusty Dippers and Shiny Cups still play ball every pleasant afternoon in Jackson Park, but Duff Cassidy is not there. I think he is working for a grocer over on Hastings Street; that is, working sometimes. He has all the primitive vices, and some others; but he has lost all the primitive virtues. He does not loaf any more; he does not know how; he does not dare to; he just sneaks a few minutes now and then furtively. He is ruined for life.

I accuse nobody in particular of Duff's downfall. I suppose it may be attributed to chance. But I think it rather excessive, rather superfluous, for Mrs. De Ruyter to say, as she said when she returned from Europe and learned the facts:

"It's really too bad, after all I did for that young man."

SHE WHO HESITATES—

By Grace Richmond Luther

THEY hit it off together very well until the new dances came in.

Things had gone so smoothly, in fact, with the Bryces that people had begun to speak of their marriage as ideal. A dangerous symptom according to cynics; almost as ill-starred as calling a politician Honest John. A successful architect, Bryce had never become too absorbed in his blueprints and T-squares to share his wife's life. A man in his profession had to be a social being. It paid. He was in demand as a dinner guest, could play a respectable hand at auction and would, if necessary, dance. The two-step was the last word in his repertoire. He was thirty-five and looked thirty.

Edith Bryce looked twenty-four and admitted nothing. She had despondent moments, though, when her hair was down, and took a lively interest in skin foods. She was up on foods in general, for that matter, and avoided starch. She thought there was only one thing worse than growing old; that was to grow old and fat. No longer could she get fitted in the Misses' Department when she wished to buy a ready-made gown. The new dances seemed to her heaven-sent. They were the only pleasant weight reducer she had met. They gave an illusion of eternal youth which would have lured Ponce de Leon from the springwater business.

She caught the microbe at a studio where she had expected merely afternoon tea and the gabble of the would-be artistic. One always found that sort of thing at the Gaylords'. Poor Bobby Gaylord couldn't have sold a picture to anybody who knew a palette knife from a maulstick. "Poor," as applied to

Bobby, was a term of endearment, for financially he did very well, thank you; so well that he could afford a studio in Central Park South, where he did unto those who would be done precisely what all concerned wanted. This fatal afternoon as the elevator, manned by a rear admiral, deposited her at the Gaylords' floor, Edith's ear caught, not the accustomed chatter, but the staccato beat of the most foot-stirring music she had heard in years. Drums and cymbals were its mainstay. A deafmute would have sensed its rhythm, a paralytic danced to it, a Zulu known it for his very own.

Bobby Gaylord caught sight of her at the threshold and advanced dancing, his hands outstretched.

"You mustn't miss this, Edith," he said. "It's 'Too Much Mustard,' you know. Greatest one-step ever written. Another gift to civilization from good old France."

"But I don't know the one-step," she protested. "We stayed late in the country this fall. I've been nowhere, done nothing—"

Bobby spun her, still protesting, out among the dancers.

"You see!" he told her. "It's instinctive—like breathing or running in debt. Everybody's doing it because everybody can." He deftly guided her into another movement. "Now you're grapevining," he said. "Simple, isn't it?"

It did seem simple with Bobby for teacher, and before he found her another partner and himself capered away with a possible picture buyer, she felt herself expert. By and by Gaylord hunted her out and taught her one or two tango steps.

"Practically all I know myself," he said. "But I mean to know more. Molly and I are organizing a class. You and Dan must join."

She agreed to it there and then.

"It's just what Dan needs," she added.

"Precisely," said Bobby. "If I were his doctor I'd prescribe it. We creative folk are too sedentary."

She went home afire with enthusiasm, but Bryce refused to kindle.

"I've seen those acrobatics and I don't care for them," he said.

"But you haven't tried them, Dan. Let me show you."

"I don't intend to try them. And I don't intend to play around with Bobby Gaylord. He's a joke."

Edith tried another tack.

"You are working too hard," she pleaded. "You need diversion."

"I'll pick a rational diversion."

"This kind would give you exercise."

"So would walking on my hands! Be sensible, Edith."

"You might consider me," she retorted, switching to the appeal feminine. "I shall be out of things altogether if I don't learn these dances. Why, they say there isn't a tea given without them. Besides, I like them. They made me feel younger today than I've felt in years. I want to feel young, Dan," she added plaintively. "And I want you to feel young."

"Even if I feel like a fool?"

"How can you tell how you'll feel till you try? I've never known you to be so stubborn, so inconsiderate—so selfish."

Bryce threw up his hands.

"Now we *do* rave! You know perfectly well that I've always considered you. I don't ask *you* to give up this folly, if it amuses you. Go to these tango teas all you like. But don't drag me in, that's all."

In secret she wept a little over his refusal, but before him she held her head high and rode her new hobby tirelessly. Every day she danced. Mornings she attended a class for women and discovered forgotten muscles in mastering the essential "dip." Afternoon always found her at some *thé dansant*. And in

her strictly domestic hours, also, she moved rhythmically to the strains which were never out of her head. She one-stepped to her bath, Castle-walked to her meals and, to Bryce's disgust, bought a phonograph lest she grow rusty during the evenings spent with him. He watched her gyrations before the instrument with furtive interest and, now and then, she saw his foot unconsciously beating time, but usually he would leave her in the midst of it and go to his study. He was at work on the most important commission of his life, and could no more keep it out of his thoughts than she could forget her obsession. This neglect grieved her at first, then made her resentful. It broke the sacred household law, hitherto scrupulously kept by him, that business should not be brought into the home.

The estrangement might not have been serious had not Bryce latterly taken to avoiding dining out and theater-going, but he insisted that such affairs unfitted him for the next day's work and turned a deaf ear to the once convincing argument that he must go about for the sake of his profession.

"I shall never lack work if I put this present commission through in the right way," he told her.

"But what if you break down your health meanwhile? You look fagged out already. Don't let's go on in this way, Dan," she entreated. "I'll begin to think you've ceased to care for me if—"

"If I don't tango?" he asked caustically.

"If you don't show a little interest in the things which interest me. It's your attitude, Dan, that's so unreasonable. You condemn something you know nothing about. Go to just one dance with me. If you don't like it—"

"That will be the end of it?"

"Yes," she promised, recklessly confident that one trial would make him a convert. "If you don't enjoy it, I'll never tease you to take me again."

She would have preferred to go almost anywhere else for the test than to the Gaylords', but their invitation to a costume dance chanced to be the first which offered, and Bryce said grimly that, if he

must make a fool of himself, he could think of no setting more appropriate. The night before, Edith slipped the "Too Much Mustard" record in the phonograph and taught him the first principles of the one-step.

"You see, it's very simple," she said.

"So simple it's almost idiotic," said Bryce.

He went in a jester's costume which was a relic of his Beaux Arts days, and a sadder-faced clown never wore motley. He was irritable while he dressed, grumpy in the cab and the personification of unhappy boredom on the dancing floor. The Gaylords' florid studio, which he abominated, was crammed with people he disliked and, by some impish fate, he drew the women he detested for partners. As for such dances as he tried, he bungled them dreadfully except when Edith was his pilot. He was always dropping back into the two-step, or some other hopelessly obsolete form, with disastrous results. He tore two expensive gowns, ruined a third woman's slippers and himself received a knock on the ankle which was a sore memory for a fortnight. The ride home was a silent one and Edith did not ask the verdict.

After that Bryce did what he pleased with his evenings, and presently his wife claimed a like prerogative.

"The Gaylords want me to go with them to the Osgood ball," she announced, a week or two after the costume dance fiasco. "They know that you can't spare the time to go about—that's the reason I give people—but they don't see why I should turn hermit. And neither do I. So I'm going, Dan."

"Without me?" He faced her incredulously. "In the evening?"

"If you won't go with me."

Each sensed a crisis in their relations; each believed a principle at stake; each stubbornly resolved not to yield.

"I'm going," she repeated.

"If you do," he warned, with rising anger, "it will be against my wishes—my command."

The last word was an unlucky slip.

"Your command!" She snapped her fingers at him. "Do you think you're

living in the Middle Ages? I'm not dependent on you. I have money of my own. I pay half the household expenses, and hereafter I mean to live my own life, just as you live yours. I shall accept any invitation I choose."

She did, and the breach widened daily. Foibles which hitherto had seemed amusing, even lovable, now became as sand in their teeth. She took a dislike to the habitual disorder of his study, he to her passion for arrangement. She found his pet brand of tobacco objectionable; he conceived an aversion for her favorite sachet. They disagreed about food, dress, their friends and questions of the day which excited nobody else. Once in perfect accord as to temperature and ventilation, they now discovered wide divergences, and Bryce preempted the guest room for his personal use. Trifles all, but, taken in the mass, they spelled incompatibility, which is a legal term and no trifle.

The day came when the one thing on which they agreed was that they could not live together, and when Lent took the edge off the winter's gaiety, Edith went West with a convenient aunt and established the easy proof of residence then required by Nevada law. By September she was back in New York and all but single. Three months more and the final decree would cut the last tenuous bond. Already she looked upon herself as unmarried.

And so did Bryce, though to reach this point of view he had undergone a harrowing ordeal. At the outset it had seemed to him that, no matter what the court said or left unsaid, he would always feel married to Edith. It was incredible that they should both walk the green earth and yet be nothing to each other. Unceasing toil was his anodyne during the first lonely months. The great commission went through with a success beyond his most optimistic dreams and, for the first time in his life, he found himself so placed that he could take work or leave it, as he pleased. Other men would now bear the brunt. It was his fortunate lot to direct and, if he chose, take his ease. He had often wondered what it would be like to command

leisure. Now he knew. It meant boredom. With Edith—but that was a futile path of speculation. Hard as it was to realize, Edith was no longer a factor to be considered. It was his privilege to enjoy life after the fashion of bachelors and the not too sadly bereaved.

It amazed him, now that he began to frequent his clubs once more, to find how few of his old friends had remained unmarried. He had to admit, too, that this remnant—his own expressive word—was a rather dreary lot. They talked overmuch about their digestion, these unattached males; they were self-centered, opinionated, childishly vain; and, inconsistently enough, they spent a great deal of time in the homes of the married. This tendency, which was growing stronger daily, he easily traced to its root. No longer was it a simple matter to find the right crowd for billiards or bridge. The good fellows were all footing it with their youngsters. The modern dances had devastated the clubs.

That he himself would embrace this fad which had turned society topsyturvy, uprooted his home, snatched away his wife, seemed the last fantastic touch of madness; but he came to it in the end. He fell, of all places, at a *thé dansant* in one of the fashionable restaurants, beguiled to his fate by a niece from out of town whom he was perfunctorily showing the sights. He let the girl sit idly by till she told him point blank that she had never been a wallflower before and must either dance or leave the place. Bryce danced and, to his surprise, danced well. Edith's devoted rites before the phonograph had not gone for naught.

Thenceforward he danced, wherever he found music and a partner. Consistency bothered him not at all. He argued that if Edith had not pestered him when he was absorbed in important work, he would probably have taken naturally to this new diversion, their married peace would have been unbroken, and—but here was another line of speculation it was futile to explore. If Edith had not shown bad judgment and bad temper in this particular, she

would have betrayed them in some other way with the same issue. They were better apart. Of course they were.

By and by he joined a class. His cousin, Nancy Ellis, persuaded him to this step. She said he tangoed so well that it was a pity he did not take a few lessons from a professional and become really expert. He had always respected Nancy's judgment, and she put the case so adroitly now that he assented on the spot. For a month thereafter he spent three afternoons a week in meek subjection to a blond and painfully thin young autocrat who had danced himself into fame and riches. Bryce's reward came when the dapper czar pronounced him the best pupil he had ever taught. This was said in the presence of the entire class. The rudimentary survival of a New England conscience admonished Bryce that he ought to blush with shame, but his flush, if it was a flush, was due to the intricate movement of the dance which he had just brought to a triumphant end. He was not ashamed. He was mightily set up. He felt as if he had received the accolade.

Such celebrity could not be hidden under a bushel, and Bryce's astonishing transformation came quickly to Edith's knowledge. Every intimate woman friend she had constituted herself a committee of one to confide the news. All thought it a typical case of masculine perversity and suspected a Cause of feminine gender. They did not voice this suspicion, however, for Bryce with exasperating decorum gave no ground for a definite charge. He danced with women of all ages and left a trail of golden opinions behind him. None of his enchanted partners would believe that his matrimonial bark had gone on the rocks through any fault of his. This view also reached Edith through the sure conduit of devoted friendship. Her informants thought it showed how unjust the World was to Woman. Edith's thoughts, which were hazy, she kept to herself. The clearest thing in her somewhat emotional mental processes was a mighty longing to behold her husband—no, her almost ex-husband—in his new role. Throughout the autumn she vainly

watched for him everywhere she went, but their tactful friends never invited them at the same time. Did they think she and Dan would clapperclaw each other at sight? She even went so far as to assure a few people she deemed intelligent that she had no desire to avoid him, but they remained tactful to the end.

Two weeks before the time for the final decree, each received an invitation from a friend who was too independent to exclude either. Both accepted. It was one of those curious functions which have developed, logically enough, from the dancing craze. Elaborate prizes were offered, and adult human beings, their sense of humor in abeyance, strove to outdo one another in the one-step, the tango, the hesitation and the maxixe with a seriousness befitting Olympic games. The bench of judges included a matron of impressive social position and Dutch descent, a puffy stockbroker who had once led cotillions, a Russian dancer from the Opera, and, chief in authority, Bryce's teacher, the czar and despot of the whole merryandrew saturnalia.

Bryce first glimpsed his wife tangoing with Bobby Gaylord. What an unmitigated donkey that man was! He ought to be kicked for holding her like that! Edith was thinner than when they had parted company; he remarked that at once, and irrationally hoped that she would not overdo it. He told himself that he had never realized her grace and, for a forgetful moment, experienced a glow of husbandly pride.

Edith first caught sight of her husband waltzing with his cousin. How ridiculously Nancy Ellis always dressed! And danced, too! She was clinging to Dan as if he had saved her life. Dan was at least twenty pounds lighter than last winter, she noticed. The change certainly became him. That slight flabbiness of the dewlap which she had often laughingly tried to massage away was quite gone. Eagerly she studied his dancing. Rumor had not done him justice. He was superb.

During the supper interval Bryce, who had had fits of moody abstraction, appealed to his cousin for advice.

"What is the etiquette of divorce, Nancy?" he asked. "I've seen Edith at long distance half a dozen times tonight, and we're likely to meet. Do we have to ignore each other's existence?"

"I should certainly ignore *her* existence," said Mrs. Ellis firmly. "You surprise me, Dan!"

When the dancing began again Edith said to her partner:

"Bobby, I've never been in such an awkward situation in my life. I'm sure to run into Dan if I stay here any longer. Back there in the supper room I was within a yard of him. Do you think I ought to cut him if we come face to face?"

"By all means," said Gaylord sagely. "Don't take any chances with an interlocutory decree. Why, I know a man who—"

His impressive case in point was never cited. Just then the number ended and the Bryces met. Each colored; each probed the other's eyes with a half-smile. Then Edith laughed outright and put out her hand.

"How are you, Dan?" she greeted him. "I have been admiring your dancing."

Bryce gasped and, with an answering laugh that had a queer note in it, took her outstretched hand.

"You always had a healthy sense of humor, Edith," he said. "It—it is one of your many charms."

They looked about for the others in the appalling pause which followed. Bobby the discreet was already afar off studying a tapestry. Nancy the implacable had vanished altogether.

"Cowards!" said Edith, without rancor.

"I'd have done the same in their place," said Bryce. "The situation must seem ticklish to outsiders. Yet why should you and I treat each other as if we were lepers? It's absurd."

"Isn't it? I was discussing it just now with Bobby Gaylord, but he said I mustn't take any chances with my—my suit."

"Bobby always was a fool. There is no reason under the sun why we should be enemies."

"That's the way I feel, Dan. We'll be meeting constantly. We should have met before this if people hadn't been so tiresomely tactful."

"You've noticed it, too?"

"Noticed it! It's been rammed down my throat. It makes me furious to have anyone think I harbor anything against you."

"That's very white of you, Edith. Of course you know me well enough to realize that I don't bear grudges."

"To be sure." She found it very exhilarating to scale these heights of magnanimity, and essayed a still loftier peak. "I don't propose to let people think that you're a Bluebeard just because we can't live together," she added. "I want you to consider me one of your best friends."

Bryce started.

"I'd shake hands on that if this place weren't so infernally public," he returned eagerly. "After you get your final decree we'll evolve some plan to show our mutual respect. The—the time is nearly up, isn't it?"

"There are two weeks yet." She suddenly found her voice absurdly tremulous and small.

Then the music began, and she nervously reconnoitered the scene for the college youth to whom she had promised this dance, but, aghast at the spectacle of the Bryces in friendly parley, he had secreted himself in the cloakroom.

Bryce faced her with a challenging smile.

"The hesitation," he said. "Wouldn't you like to try it with me, Edith? You know you would."

"It's impossible."

"It would convince people that we're friends, put a stop to their silly talk—"

"But, Dan—"

The next instant his arm was around her and they were out among the dancers. Neither spoke till they had circled the room. The sheer pleasure of rhythmic movement to perfect music was enough.

"I've not had such a partner this winter," he said at last.

"Nor I, Dan."

They rounded another circle under a

hail of amused glances to which they were oblivious.

"You're still keeping house, aren't you?" she asked.

"After a fashion. I sleep there. I eat at clubs and restaurants."

"Dan! You'll ruin your digestion. You mustn't go on that way. I know of a splendid cook. She has promised to come to me when I find an apartment, but I'll gladly give her up to you."

"You mustn't do that, Edith. I'll get along somehow."

They danced.

"What a lot we've missed, dear!" said Bryce.

"This sort of thing, you mean?"

"Not altogether."

"Not altogether!" she repeated.

"What else have you missed, Dan? Surely not me?"

His arm tightened as they swayed together.

"You've said it, Edith—you've said it! It's you—you—that counts. You were always such a good pal. Oh, but what's the use?"

"You were a good pal, too, Dan. I can't in justice say anything else."

"Look at me, Edith," he commanded.

"I can't," she laughed, her face against his lapel. "You're holding me so close."

"You must get used to it then. I'll never let you go."

She stiffened in his embrace, but her cheeks were adorably flushed and her eyes not unkind.

"Don't, Dan," she entreated. "This isn't friendship."

"Friendship! It isn't friendship I want, and you know it. It's you. But you don't care. You never really cared or—"

"Don't say it, Dan," she stopped him. They danced.

There were not half a dozen people besides themselves on the floor. The whole ballroom was watching the comedy. The news had even spread to the smoking room. The doorways were thronged.

"Dan," said Edith.

"Yes?" said Dan.

"About that cook: you've simply got

to take her. I shall worry myself sick if you don't have proper food."

"You'll get over it."

"Don't be unreasonable." As she voiced it, the familiar phrase rang a little bell in her memory. "Or stubborn," she laughed.

"I get your point," said Bryce.

"And you'll promise to take that cook? To please me? I'll bring her round myself. Somebody who knows must explain your ways to her. I *do* know."

"But—"

"And, Dan! If—if you don't mind, I think I'll stay myself."

As the music ceased he was holding her in a manner which even that unmitigated donkey Bobby Gaylord would have deprecated. She drooped to him with an abandon which that clinging vine Nancy Ellis had never rivaled.

They won the hesitation prize, by the way. It was a loving cup.



THE LAST DEMAND

By Faith Baldwin

LIFE, you have bruised me and chilled me; Fate, you have jeered at my pain; Dreams, you have mocked while you thrilled me—so I turn to the battle again. Love, you have blessed me and led me; the lips that have kissed you, you smite; Hope, you have urged me and fled me—but left is the joy of the fight!

Never was I a coward! Now must I prove my worth.
 World, I will give you my courage; not tears but a hard-bought mirth.
 Work of my hands I grant you, labor and toil of brain,
 But heart and soul shall be wanting—for they are dead of pain!
 Forward! A fight to the death, then! Life is a sorry jest.
 Ahead! To the thick of tumult! Fate is a fool at the best.
 Courage! The war gods are greatest! Love is a false, fair light.
 To arms! For Dreams are frail bubbles, and Hope but a song in the night.
 World, I cast down the gauntlet, for you were made to defy!
 Own me a foe for your mettle! Ah, fighting let me die!
 Love, Hope and Dreams I give you; Life I fling at your feet;
 I will drink to the dregs of the bitter—for once I had tasted of sweet!
 Of one last taunt I shall rob you; stern, I will claim my due;
 One recompense you shall give me, balm I will snatch from you.
 'Tis neither Fame nor Glory—toys to break and regret;
I demand to conquer Memory! I demand that I—forget.



KRISS—Who stood up for him when he married?
 KROSS—Nobody. They all called him an idiot.

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

A MUSICAL enthusiast is one who will pass up a ball game to attend a matinee performance of "Rigoletto."

DOCTOR'S Auto Turns Turtle.—*News-paper headline.*

If more automobiles turned tortoise, fewer would turn turtle.

TAKE YOUR CHOICE:

Honesty is the best policy.

But—All's fair in love and war.

The child is father of the man.

But—It's a wise child that knows its own father.

Man is made of clay.

But—It takes nine tailors to make a man.

None but the brave deserve the fair.

But—Discretion is the better part of valor.

TRUTH:

If there is any one subject more than another upon which I consider myself qualified authoritatively to write, it is Truth. To write with authority on any subject, one must have perspective and judicial detachment, qualities gained only by distance.

Truth has been compared to a delicate flower, blooming only under the tenderest care, and to a shy white maiden, the glory of whose beauty can only be known after long and painful search through tangled forests. Bosh! Truth is more like a brazen huzzy in a fig leaf, who follows a chap about, insisting on his looking at her mottled nudity, whether he wants to or not. All human progress represents a laborious struggle to escape from Truth, to miti-

gate the rasping harshness of its behests.

There was Truth in the lusty crash of the caveman's hammer as it descended on the pericranium of the cave maiden, for it exactly expressed his sentiments; and there was Truth in his satisfaction as he dragged the unconscious lady home to his subterranean habitation. What happens today in these delicate circumstances? Why, thank Heaven, we cast Truth to the winds and trot out all our very best deceits for the occasion. We tell her that we can't live without her, when we know perfectly well that anything she can do won't make us eat one ounce less at our next meal. We assure her that she and she alone can lift us to a higher moral plane, when we know positively that she hasn't the mentality of a canary bird. We inform her that she has always been the guiding star of our lives, when we know all the time that we would rather have had the little Wilkins girl but for the fact that this one had more money. We swear that she is the most divinely beautiful thing under heaven, and all the time we are thinking of her slight squint and her gingery freckles. It is all very pleasant, and for the moment each of us almost believes it.

Look where one will in these happy latter days, he cannot but rejoice in some unmistakable evidence of the decay of Truth. The abominable fetich still lurks in the slums and mean streets, but it has been definitely exiled from all circles with pretensions to politeness. The Church has exorcised it, the Bar has exiled it, Politics has abjured it, Trade has cast it out, Art has forgotten it, Society has cut it.

SLAVES OF THE GUN

By Donn Byrne

A SHELL, Litvin knew, would burst over the quick-firer at most within the hour, but before that he wanted to empty his automatic into the lieutenant's neck.

Or, if he didn't get the chance to do it, Gorkoi, who was oiling up the breechblock, would do it for him.

The crew of the quick-firer were lazing in the redoubt, waiting for the jangle of the telephone at the lieutenant's elbow. The sight setter was poring over his chart. Moriarity, the black-haired Irishman with the flags tattooed on his chest, stood ready to heave at the lanyard at the word of command. The huge disappearing gun seemed to doze with the men. A word from the lieutenant and it would rise with the quick, easy action of a cat, peer over the parapet of the redoubt, cough its shell out with a vicious bark, and slip back into position again in less than half a minute.

The attacking fleet had passed Point Toro by now and were well into the bay. At five miles' distance, the squat gray cruisers and dreadnoughts looked like corks bobbing on the water, even through glasses. Before them threads of heavy black smoke poured from the funnels of the torpedo boats. Over it all hung a blue heat haze.

It was hard to believe that the crawling gray specks in the distance would soon vomit shell and shrapnel at the forts along the canal bank. It seemed impossible that in a few minutes the bloated mortars in their pits and the long, graceful twelve-inch guns on their pivots and the short, vicious quick-firers would shell the moving gray spots. There was a lull in the air, a feeling as if life had passed through one period and

was resting for a moment before taking up the next.

Six weeks ago Litvin and Gorkoi had been in the steerage of a liner bound from St. Petersburg to New York, coming to America to make their fortunes. Now they were in a redoubt by the Panama Canal, and within a few moments of battle.

What the war was about they had no idea. The policy of the nation toward contiguous countries had aroused the enmity of an European power, but what had that to do with them? Their work was to carry shells and heave the lanyard.

And ten weeks before they had both been privates in the Grodno Artillery Corps, working off their conscript period by tending the giant Krupp guns. Their service had been one long nightmare of drilling, oiling the steel monsters, pulling at the heavy breechblocks, obeying the barked commands of the brutal red-faced sergeant from the Dneiper country and the whims of the tall, tanned captain from Moscow, who would lash his men in the face with his riding crop when the weather was bad.

They had one week around Second Avenue and the wharves of the North River, fruitlessly looking for work, when they fell into the hands of the trim infantry sergeant in City Hall Park. After all, to enlist was better than to starve.

A few weeks' vigorous drilling in the new words of command, a rigid disciplining from Lieutenant Monahan, and here they were crouching behind the shield of the nine-pounder, ready for Moriarity's quick lurch of shoulder and the crashing boom of the gun.

The fleet was closer now. Their gray-

ish hulks against the blue and green of the water gave them the appearance of sinister sea animals. White smoke trailed in thin wisps from their stacks, broke into elusive puffy clouds and blotches, and then disappeared. Microscopic blurs of white showed where the bows cut the water into foam.

Against all this Litvin felt a fierce dull surge of anger. Gorkoi felt it, too. They had come to the new country to make their fortunes, not to lose their lives. They had left one purgatory to drop into a hell. What had they to do with all this? All they wanted was something to eat and a place to sleep. They were warring against no one.

The lieutenant shut his binoculars with a snap. They wouldn't have to wait much longer, he knew. The fleet was within effective range.

To the right and left men were scurrying to and fro in the sixty-foot-deep concrete pits where the mortars were concealed. Men were busy around the twelve-inch guns, examining lights, placing shells, oiling bearings. To their right on the hill a head bobbed up and disappeared where another quick-firer was hidden. Somewhere in the background the electricians sat before their key-boards, ready to press the buttons that would fire the submarine mines. Somewhere in the background the range finders spied from clumps of trees, figuring out to the yard the distance of the gray hulks. Somewhere further back were the commanders' headquarters. No sign of life was anywhere. Down the bay the periscope of a submarine showed for a moment. A fish flashed in the sun as it leaped where the submarine passed. Beyond the shield of the quick-firer a grasshopper broke into a resonant trill.

The fleet began to take definite shape. They were no longer gray blotches on a blue field; they were behemoths of forged steel. In the distance Litvin could see the short, bulgy smokestacks and the vague, graceful lines of the latticed turrets. They stretched out in a long, sweeping curve. There was no blotch of white at their bows now. They were motionless.

The small black specks that were tor-

pedo destroyers began racing in front of the fleet. They slid around and about each other as in some figure of a grotesque dance. Heavy viscid smoke poured from their funnels like flying black banners. They were making the smoke screen through which the fleet would fire.

Around the nine-pounder the crew were passing the time easily enough. The sight setter leaned over and passed a packet of cigarettes to Moriarity. Big blond Schmidt potted around the bombproof ammunition case. Gorkoi leaned against the shield and looked at the lieutenant with heavy, sullen eyes. His stupid moonlike face was dilated into a strained scowl. Litvin knew he would do the trick if he got the chance. Litvin would rather do it himself. The lieutenant lounged near the telephone and listened.

If, argued Litvin and Gorkoi, anyone were to blame for their position, it was the authority for which this lieutenant was the symbol. They had served five years in an artillery regiment in Russia. Good! They had patience to stand that. They had come here to live. They had asked for bread—they had been given flaming shrapnel. By God, they were not going to stand that, they said, as they fingered the Colts in their holsters. There were officers' graves in Manchuria for which the Japanese were not responsible.

The telephone broke into a subdued jangle.

"Ready there, boys," the lieutenant called. The muscles of his cheek bones began to bulge.

He talked into the instrument in staccato jerks.

Over where the fleet was, there was now a cloud of brownish smoke. It stretched in a long sweep on either side, and rose like a wall vertically. It looked as if an immense piece of black cloth had been hung halfway across the bar. At the top it broke into thin wisps and floated upward. From below billows of smoke rose to repair the frayed edges. Here and there a torpedo boat dashed in and out of the screen, like a rabbit scuttling in and out of a hutch.

Away back in the Mindi Hills, Litvin knew, infantry were crawling forward on their stomachs in the grass ready to repulse with the edge of the bayonet any attempt at landing. He knew they were swarming along the canal banks that swept in a zigzag behind him.

The feeling of rage that possessed him was passing off somewhat. Though he still burned with resentment at what he felt was a wrong done him, and though he still fiddled with the revolver at his belt when the lieutenant's back was turned, what was acting on him was the feeling of hopelessness the artilleryman has in combat. He felt as if he and the rest of the crew and the men in the mortar pits were only helots to the pulsing iron engines that fought each other with flame and steel, and that boomed and thundered and crashed with the rage of battle.

The smoke screen in the distance had become darker. It hung over the bar like a pall. One felt as if something horribly sinister lurked behind it ready to spring out in an instant. It was as the mouth of a hole in which there were terrible writhing reptiles that would strike with venomous fangs.

The strain of waiting was beginning to tell on the men in the redoubt. The lieutenant walked about the gun with nervous, hesitating steps. Litvin noticed that Moriarity's cigarette had gone out, but that he still held it tightly clenched between his teeth.

And then the twelve-inch gun on the right went off with a deafening crash.

There were two more muffled reports from the mortar pit up the hill. And the twelve-inch fired again.

In the middle of the black smoke screen there were two violet spots that flickered for a moment and went out, like electric bulbs. The shells passed overhead, screaming as they went.

Litvin turned around and looked; there were two yawning holes up the hill. From the distance the report of the naval guns came like dull thuds on a bass drum.

The smoke screen was spangled with little crimson and violet spots. The air overhead was filled with the noise of the

shells passing. Sometimes there was a fierce, vicious hum as of a top spinning, and again a shrill whistle such as a boy would make, and again a shell would pass with a heartbreaking scream. Then the sounds would be blotted out by the deafening crash from the forts.

Around the quick-firer there was nothing to do yet. They would have to wait until one of the slim gray torpedo boats tried to slip past, or until the cruisers edged along with the tanned, hawk-faced sharpshooters fondling their heavy bore rifles in the turrets, or until the fleet had landed a battalion of devil-may-care infantry that would storm the hill with cold steel. Then the crew of the gun would become perspiring, fighting devils, and Litvin and Gorkoi would get their chance.

Along the hill heavy smoke rings rose in the air gracefully from the mouths of the twelve-inchers. They ascended in perfect white circles, widened and broke into fantastic whorls and graceful arabesques. Occasionally a puffy cloud of smoke sped upward like a gigantic baseball. Little wisps of white vapor sailed by like detached pieces of cloud.

All forts and ships were in action now. The twelve-inch guns and the mortars fired with ear-splitting crashes and in resonant booms. Shells would flash overhead like monster birds. From the distance the firing of the fleet resembled the popping of corks.

The fleet was drawing closer. Their spars and turrets through the smoke showed like trees in a mist. Crimson flashes flicked in and out of their sides.

Back along the canal bank an armored train puffed slowly. It seemed to advance with nervous, spasmodic jerks. Its square, squat carriage and dwarfed engine gave it the appearance of a child's toy in the distance. As it stopped, men emerged in hordes like swarming bees. They lined up rapidly and disappeared into the undergrowth. Litvin wondered where they were going. The train backed off with queer spats of smoke from the funnel of the engine.

No one spoke in the redoubt now. The sight setter had clamped his telephone receiver to his head and had sunk

into his seat. Litvin thought somehow of a picture he had seen of a man in the electric chair. Moriarity had taken off his tunic and slouch hat and crouched by the lanyard, a curly-headed, muscular figure in his singlet. Schmidt stood by the bombproof ammunition wagon. The lieutenant poked about the mechanism of the gun with an electric torch. Gorkoi still looked at him stupidly.

Once the nine-pounder began firing, Litvin knew, it would not be long until the fleet spotted it. One piece of shrapnel would finish both gun and crew. If he and Gorkoi could only act immediately, they might have a chance of escape.

The fleet was nearer. A shell passed close overhead and buried itself a hundred yards further on. The ground shook as if someone were beating it with a gigantic club. A fierce hissing sound was heard. Litvin shivered spasmodically.

The lieutenant turned around and looked at him.

"Steady now, steady there, boy," he laughed.

Litvin didn't understand, but the tone surprised him. If a man had shivered in Cronstadt, he would have been struck in the face with a heavy metal scabbard.

The fleet was within two miles. They steamed forward in a crescent, the small, vicious torpedo boats running in front, as a terrier trots in front of a mastiff. The bay was covered with fleeting blotches of black and drab smoke. Around the bows of the cruisers was a dense gray covering from the fire of the heavy turret guns.

The telephone jangled again. The lieutenant picked up the receiver, and a few minutes later hung up with a click. He spoke to the sight setter a moment. The sight setter leaned forward and fiddled at his wheel.

"Ready there?" he shouted.

"All ready," Moriarity answered. His voice rose in a sort of chant.

"Let her go then."

Moriarity spat on his hands and heaved at the lanyard.

Litvin never knew what happened afterward. He found himself passing

cordite shells from Gorkoi to Schmidt, who opened the breechblock, slammed them in and locked it again. The roar of the gun seemed continuous.

The bay was one mass of mist. Overhead a shell burst with a shriek. Chunks of metal flew around, carrying tiny smoke trails. A heavy smell of burnt gunpowder was in the air. The figures in the redoubt took on the appearance of hazy phantoms.

In the bay Litvin could see the turrets of the fleet. They seemed to oscillate in the mist. The heavy naval guns fired in sheets of flame.

The big twelve-inch gun on the left was silent. Its long barrel and heavy carriage were now a mass of charred and twisted steel. Its delicate mechanism was a heap of scrap iron. Its crew were lying in distorted, grotesque attitudes about the rampart of sand bags that had protected them.

Around the quick-firer the men were working in a frenzy. Moriarity had thrown off his singlet and stood by the lanyard naked to the waist. The sight setter steered frantically as he studied his chart. The lieutenant glared through his binocular at the mist on the bar.

Now, thought Litvin, would be a good time to act, but he was too busy passing the shells.

Something gray glided through the mist on the water. It scurried around the columns of gray smoke. The lieutenant began shouting wildly. Litvin saw it was a torpedo destroyer.

The sight setter swung the nose of the gun to the left, and then downward. Litvin saw the boat creep for a moment in the space between the clouds. Then they fired.

"At the funnels! At the funnels! At the funnels!" the lieutenant yelled.

They fired again.

Through the mist Litvin saw a burst of flame from the deck of the destroyer. It licked upward in a broad red flare. Then the smoke swallowed it.

Litvin was becoming accustomed to the sounds. There was the terrible crash of the twelve-inch guns and the deep bass boom of the mortars. Somewhere up the hill something exploded

every minute with claps of thunder. The quick-firer had a sharp, vicious crackle. The guns of the fleet exploded with the boom of great waves lashing rocks.

They stopped firing to clean out the gun. The wet mop struck the barrel with a series of violent hisses. Steam rushed out in clouds.

Litvin had no longer the nerve to carry out his plan. The lieutenant was safe from him, at any rate. He felt only an immense pity for himself.

Gorkoi was still resolute. As the lieutenant flitted by in the steam, he lugged out his automatic. He swung it up to his hip.

The redoubt seemed to jump clean up in the air. It rocked backward and forward. There was a gigantic bulge inward on the earthworks—a heavy sulphurous smell.

Litvin's knees gave way. The nine-pounder seemed to tilt vertically. The redoubt, too, was swinging like the weight of a clock. Battle was a half-forgotten dream.

The lieutenant was shaking him by the shoulder.

"You're all right," he was saying. "You're all right, do you understand? All right!"

His voice seemed to come across illimitable distances.

Litvin pulled himself together.

"You're not hit," the lieutenant repeated. "Do you understand, you're all right!"

Litvin wished he had died.

He looked around. Gorkoi was huddled up by the broken earthwork. There was a red stain where his face had been.

The lieutenant stopped as he passed and put his handkerchief over it.

A little further on Moriarity lay at full length across his mop. There was a heavy irregular scarlet splotch across his bared back.

Schmidt staggered from the bomb-proof ammunition case to the gun with a cordite shell. The gun setter was leaning back in his seat.

Litvin was shaken terribly. He knew Gorkoi was dead. He felt as if he had lost all anchorage. He wished he were

up in the clouds of smoke where the shells and shrapnel lashed past.

The lieutenant turned around and smiled at him.

"You're all right, boy," he said; "you're all right."

Litvin felt a warm splash on his hand. He looked down. There was no stain where he expected blood.

He put his hand up to his face. He found he was crying.

Two figures crept through the grass. They jumped into the redoubt. Litvin saw the lieutenant giving orders.

He staggered forward and picked up the lanyard. Schmidt rammed in the shell and locked the breech.

The lieutenant rapped a crisp command, and Litvin heaved as he had seen Moriarity do.

He went on heaving time after time. The figures passing the shells worked with the speed and accuracy of mechanisms. As Schmidt opened the breech Litvin caught for the moment a glimpse of tousled yellow hair and bloodshot eyes.

To Litvin the battle had taken on a vague, unreal aspect. He felt that the lanyard he was pulling was his only protection against the flashing, screaming, reeling monsters into whose quarrel he had intruded.

Down the hill smoke rolled in billows like a fluid. At other times it rose like an evaporation from the ground. Sometimes there was an open space. Across the smoke, three miles to the front, the waters of the bay splashed under the sun in tiny flashing pinpoints. Back of him, the canal with its clearing and fringe of forest stood out like a picture in a book.

Out in the bay boats were reeling in a drunken frenzy. They swayed from side to side and seemed to plunge in and out of the smoke chasms. Once Litvin saw a cruiser drift by in a splash of flame. Half a mile out a dreadnought sank placidly into the water, and as Litvin looked she was gone. Boatloads of sailors and marines drifted about like pieces of wreckage.

From the heaving on the lanyard, Litvin's arms had become heavy as bars

of lead. There was a dull ache to his back when he bent to the pull. His eyes were blinded with sweat.

Occasionally the lieutenant would look toward him.

"Good boy," he would shout; "good boy!"

Then Litvin felt as though his heart would burst.

The lieutenant's smile and words were all he had to cling to now. He once touched the automatic in its holster and recoiled as from a shock.

He braced his shoulders and heaved time after time.

All the action appeared to him as a wild nightmare from which he would soon wake up. The incidents of battle were as strange and disjointed to him as the action of the Apocalypse. They were as things he might have read in school, distorted and set awry by years of forgetfulness.

Once a dirigible passed overhead from its shelter on the hill. From below it looked like a monstrous caterpillar. The whir of its propellers struck him as the humming of a thousand fans. It seemed to glide through the air as on rollers.

It passed over the bay and veered around. A pair of torpedo destroyers raced after it like greyhounds. Litvin could see small figures scrambling over the whaleback decks.

The dirigible hung over a cruiser for a minute, motionless. Clouds of smoke poured from the cruiser's smokestacks. The bow cut through the water like a giant knife. The cruiser made straight for the shore.

"Look! Look!" the lieutenant yelled. "Oh, my God!"

The dirigible followed lazily.

The torpedo boats cut through the water. Smoke came from their funnels horizontally.

Something like a black speck dropped from the dirigible. It was like a drop of ink against an immense background of sky.

"Hi, hi, hi!" The lieutenant raised himself on his toes and flapped his arms.

The cruiser crumpled in a blinding crimson blur. Wisps of black smoke

curled upward. There was a forest of specks where it had been.

The dirigible turned around and made for the center of the bay. The torpedo boats seemed to heel over as they turned to follow. They pivoted around in a swirl of white foam.

The dirigible floated slowly toward the flagship of the fleet.

A puff of white smoke came from the forward deck of the first torpedo boat. Something seemed to flash upward. A moment later the second torpedo boat fired.

There was a speck of flame like the flash of a lighting match along the dirigible's flank. The speck widened with a report like a gigantic firecracker. There was something like a huge flaming comet in the sky.

The dirigible plunged downward in a crimson blaze. A pillar of steam went up where it struck the water.

Litvin could hardly keep on his feet now. Only the lieutenant's smile and cheery yell kept him from dropping. His knees were giving way. Huge weights seemed to pull his shoulders down. There was a dull insistent ache between his eyes.

He was no longer afraid. He was just dead tired. He could not believe that he had started out to shoot the lieutenant that morning. Why, it was only the sight of the lieutenant kept him standing by his post.

He had forgotten Gorkoi, lying crumpled up at the rampart, with his smashed face showing red through the handkerchief.

He felt as though he were at a theater and as if he were sleepy. What was happening took place vaguely. It had no interest for him. An aeroplane crept above them, whirring like the wheel of a lathe. It had come out of its small hangar on board the flagship's deck. As it passed over a mortar pit, a shell caught it flush in the chassis. Pieces of metal and strips of canvas swirled down like monster snowflakes.

Another time, out of the mist at the foot of the hill, a battalion of infantry dashed forward rapidly. Their bayonets were fixed.

"Shove her down," the lieutenant ordered.

The gun setter dropped the muzzle into range.

Schmidt hurried to the ammunition case.

"Shrapnel, you fool!" the lieutenant snapped.

The battalion was a thousand yards away.

Litvin heard his order. He set his feet apart and fired.

Shrapnel burst over the platoon like a Bengal light. There was a twenty-yard gap in it when the flash cleared.

They fired again and again. The line closed up and rushed. There was hardly a company now.

Then gray, silent figures sprang up in front of the redoubt. They fixed up the tripods of machine guns, and squinted at the advancing line. In the haze the guns had the appearance of top-heavy insects.

The guns began to sputter and hiss.

"Good work, good work," the lieutenant was cheering.

There were not more than twenty men charging now, and now not more than a dozen, and again only six, and then none at all. The machine guns stopped their vicious barking. The squad took them down and disappeared again.

There was another vague period. A mine went up in the bay in a black col-

umn of water, mud and metal. Spars shot into the air. Then it seemed to Litvin that they weren't firing so often now.

Then somewhere there was a bugle calling.

He still stood by the lanyard until the lieutenant walked over to him and thumped him on the shoulder.

"It's over now," he said. "That's 'cease firing.'"

Litvin looked around. There was still the hazy mist of smoke. In the bay two ships drifted helplessly with their flags down. Along the shore there were others beached. In the distance a hulk burned dully.

In front of him he could see the water sparkling under the sun. Then there was the hazy fire zone. Then behind was the riotous green of the jungle and the silvery white line of the canal.

He remembered them little by little.

The lieutenant was grinning at him.

"You pulled that lanyard finely, young fellow."

Litvin tried to speak, but his throat seemed like a piece of hard leather. He raised his hand in salute.

The lieutenant began kicking the empty brass cartridge cases away from the gun.

"Bully little fellow, that Russian," he thought. "Fine little chap. Wonder why the deuce he is looking at me so queerly?"



THE MENDICANT

By Arthur Wallace Peach

FROM door to door I went, and begged
A bit of food, a night's repose;
But everywhere in haunts of wealth
I saw the quick door close.

At last, deep in an alley's murk,
I fell, but hands uplifted me,
And where hearts had but crusts to give,
I feasted regally!

A MAN IN A CLUB WINDOW

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

UP from the cauldron of the past,
Now that love's day is nearly done,
Leap lips I loved and forms I clasped
The frail, fair Daughters of the Sun;
Eyes blue and brown, and gay and grave;
The creamy throat, the swarthy cheek;
The dancing nymph, the languid slave;
The soul of flame, the spirit weak.

I dream and I forget; they pass
Before my thought can count their shames:
Mere shadows on a listless glass,
Mean memories and empty names.
They are the dim, phantasmal sprites,
(Stage plays of beauty, laughter, woe)
That helped to speed forgotten nights—
Because I had and let them go.

But Someone Else, another shape,
Remains forever by me there,
Beyond all capture, all escape,
For my desire and my despair:
So them, the Daughters of the Sun,
The setting sun has gathered in,
And I remember only one:
The woman that I did not win.



"SHE was once a headliner in society."
"Yes? Now she isn't even a footnote."



ROMANCE is reality from a distance.



DIPLOMACY is the art of getting somewhere when you appear to be going nowhere.

THE HOOKERS

By Kate Masterson

WHEN Charles Dickens pen-pictured that delightful rascal Skimpole, I wonder if he had any prophetic instinct which told him that he was creating the apostle of a new cult—a glorious school of optimistic, light-hearted persons whose philosophy might be summed up in that old, comfortable, bromidic belief that the world owed them a living, and that to acquire that living, cheerfully, easily and without effort, was their appointed part in the Big Scheme!

I am alluding now to that gallant modern host to which the fluctuations in market prices, the high cost of living, rents and other expenses having to do with the, to others, vexed problems of existence have no terrors.

Steaks and chops may soar in cost, laundry bills may become ruinous, electric lights luxurious as orchids, cab fares extortionate—everything that has to do with mere existence alone excessive in charge—yet this army of progressives marches on, not to the places where the grapes and oil and honey are stored, but through them, sipping as they go, tasting here and there, picking out the soft, rich spots, and leaving the skins, the bones and the ashes for others to clean up.

Who are they, you say?

The Hookers.

Who are the Hookers?

They are the original lilies of the field—they toil not, neither do they spin, nor work sewing machines, nor tap typewriters, nor sweat their brows over any of life's problems.

They are the charming, certainly wise and surely audacious ones who manage in the most graceful way in the world—to live upon others.

I used to have a severely critical feeling for them once, but as the years have come and gone, bringing varying fortune to me and other mere working persons who toil and think and strive and fail and pick up and try again, worrying almost always as to the chance of not being able to pay—pay—pay the landlord, the butcher, the baker and the pianola collector, I still see the Hookers—some of them, the same original Hookers—buoyant, smiling, still on the job, unsoured apparently by any of life's heartaches and disappointments. I can't help wondering: Are the Hookers right?

Are they not the Omars—as well as the Skimpoles—of these troubled times, who adapt the beautiful lines of the Persian poet to the requirements of the up-to-date and translate them into the always comfortable motto: What's the use?

No doubt the ancients had them, Greek and Roman Hookers, Egyptian Skimpoles, who fluttered through life getting the froth of things as they went by, skipping the deserts and the waste places and acquiring an almost uncanny facility for picking out the fruitful vines which they fed from until nothing remained but the stems.

For the old-fashioned mendicant was always purely a mendicant. He appealed by his need, his begging qualities, his ragged coat and thin-worn shoes. He was on hand when anything was given out, but never in the gay and debonair manner of the modern genius-of-the-gentle - art - of - getting - everything - for-nothing. This simple begging type is archaic in these days.

The modern Hooker is blithe, gay and often condescending in his accepting of

the goods the gods and goddesses provide. In these days, especially when the anxious-eyed housekeeper is trying to make two chops grow where only one grew before on the original lamb; when potatoes and tomatoes are sold by the pound and an extra place at dinner means about six times what it used to, the manner of the Hooker is, if anything, a reproach to anyone who would allow for a moment the sordid question of the cost of things to agitate the atmosphere.

For one of the inexplicable—shall I say charms?—of these bright-eyed ones is that their manner and conversation always teem with luxuriant prodigality. They are the sort, they make you understand, always ready to divide the last dollar with a friend. What, after all, is the possession of anything worth except to give it to those we like?

And we all know in our hearts that this is true, but we find that those who talk always in this strain are the ones who never by any chance or possibility share anything or give anything—or, indeed, have anything, except an exorbitant talent for visiting, borrowing, getting invited to other people's houses and always acquiring something. There never is a minute that the trained Hooker isn't in it.

If a lull occurs in the feast, he turns nonchalantly to the cigarettes his host provides, and absent-mindedly fills his case. Sometimes when the going is bad he can get nothing but matches. And surely matches are the one commodity which are flung in people's faces in these days of smoking competition. Matches are easy, and they are also light in weight, but I am quite sure that if a real bred-in-the-bone Hooker saw a chance to carry off a dirigible he would not shy at it.

He is a scientist. He runs up no actual bills. He contracts no real debts. He takes with apparent indifference. Frequently he criticizes what he is getting. He gets peevish over the cooking or the special brand of thing that is spread before him. He is amusing. One of these days someone will put a real all-around Hooker into a play

and it will be what the rude call a "scream."

I recall one of these—an exotic Italian artist who was always being entertained at this club and that club; and knowing his tendencies to sniff around hungrily when the hour of the *apéritif* was over, I said to him delicately:

"Don't you find it embarrassing to accept so much in the way of—well, dinners—which you cannot possibly return?"

His eyes flashed. He positively threw back his mane. I had roused the tiger in his lair. "Not at all," he replied coldly. "I give them my society. They are rather stupid persons themselves. It bores me somewhat."

This was lovely. Almost as much so as the remark of another third degree Hooker that a hard-working illustrating girl had managed to accumulate without meaning to do so. He dropped in for dinner one evening. They always do drop in.

She happened to have that night a broiled partridge with the salad. This was before the days when partridges cost like peacocks' tongues. His eyes glistened as he helped himself.

"Some day," he said, "I'll take you to a place where they know how to *cook* partridge!" This was his bread and butter note—the only kind he ever sent.

As a general thing the professionals are not so crude. They practise nice speeches, and one of the fads with the male of the species is to affect the dinner coat, the light society manner, with thousands of invitations of importance which he is neglecting at that special time in order that you may bore him to death. And probably he has. The Hookers, as I have said, are scientists.

And this Skimpolishness is largely a secret of their success. They are so merry and bright! Possibly it evens up the score. Earnest workers and bill payers are very often depressing. The others seem to skip the hurdles in some way; often they are musical, can tell good stories, which they also acquire; sometimes they have a social standing and dull people are actually glad of their company.

There are a dozen or more of them who go about merely because they are the sons or brothers or something or other of someone whose name is known in literature, in art, in politics. It recalls the story of the tall lady in black who was never absent from certain studio parties. If you inquired who she was, you were told in awed whispers that her husband was the first man to be killed in a flying machine!

But do not imagine that a little free food is all that they annex. They graduate to triumphs in which they get weekends, whole summers, trips abroad, clothing funds, everything they need through the patronage of someone with money enough to see them through—one of the many whose lives are dull and barren of all but that one necessary thing—money.

These are, of course, the class the Hooker is looking for, the Good Spenders, who, bereft of everything else, have to pay for whatever companionship they get. The mere possession of money does not insure anyone from boredom, dyspepsia or a dry and barren existence that welcomes anything as a relief.

This class, you will find, as a rule frequent the smart—or popular—restaurants. And the Hooker flocks to these places, ready for the fray, looking for game. He knows the group that is barred socially, the crowd that is immersed in some unpleasant scandal that has made them *persona non grata*—women and men on the ragged edge of the social system—and of course fair prey.

When the parasite sets upon the criminal or the next-to-criminal, you get a certain sort of divine balance. If the Hookers would only confine their operations to this special set, we might look on them thankfully, as we do on certain forms of animal life that destroy the worse fry.

But all are fish that come to his net, and the visiting Pittsburgher, rich but honest, the clothing merchant from the South, the Western buyer escorting a cloak model, flash aristocratic boys with chorus girls—the Hooker knows them all and mixes well.

You will see him every afternoon in the special restaurant that he makes his lair. He goes through the aisles of the café, cigarette alight, panama hat well tilted over his eyes, clothes immaculate. He looks as though projected from some grooming establishment; in reality he is just about getting breakfast—a bit of breakfast, he will call it—and he can manage it from part of a luncheon, tea or dinner that is being served to any group that invites him or permits him to join them.

He gets his smokes, his drinks, his meals day after day. He never suggests returning any of these courtesies; he never orders anything, that is, with the intention of paying for it. If anyone should suggest by so much as the wink of an eyelash that it is his turn to do so, he is off to a telephone, to speak to a friend, to keep an engagement, with a glance at his watch and an apology.

There was a terrible occasion once when a man, desiring to humiliate a Hooker, called for the check, and, speaking in quite clear tones, told the waiter that he desired to pay for all but the items consumed by the graft scientist.

That young man was somewhat stunned and everybody was uncomfortable. The item of the Hooker's portion was not more than half a dollar. But that young man, with gay and airy nonchalance, had another and separate check made out and signed for it!

For the glorious thing about him is that he makes good at his game. He gets in—he even reaches circles that give him a glamor in the eyes of those who could never reach those social havens. Often business chances of worth come his way, for the very men he victimizes are clever enough to see his talent and hope to put it to their own uses.

But he never works as well for anyone as for himself, and he means to marry a rich girl so that he may not have to work at all. The rich girl may be a successful actress, or even a business woman, so long as her pecuniary status is strong enough to give him vantage ground and a visiting card with a real address on it.

For he is never known to have an actual dwelling place, although of course he must sleep somewhere when he is not a guest. If he has any club connection he makes the most of it, or he has his mail and telephone messages sent to some hotel where he calls in daily. As a general thing he actually resides in a hall room somewhere in an out-of-the-way district, and his rent and laundry bills are his only personal expenses.

He never talks of this spot though, but always of the Waldorf, the St. Regis, the Knickerbocker and the Lambs, according to whatever crowd he may be with. At a certain Fifth Avenue café where every afternoon, about cocktail time, millionaires, sports and sharpers, politicians, brokers and mere idlers meet in well dressed democracy, there are to be found these alert-eyed, smiling men of the pictorial "varsity" type, who manage to be mistaken for everything and anything but what they are—Hookers.

The female is never so charming or so slick. She is a little bit greedy, and she makes terrible blunders when she becomes enthusiastic over her gettings. In the higher social walks she is of good family and good manners, and works the sympathy cue. She has so little to live on, and yet by dexterous cheerfulness she hangs on to the skirts of richer ones and manages to live like a lady, ride in motors, get invitations—all on nothing a year. Her pathos wins, but after a year or so, as you see the pathos cue still bringing in the returns, you get to distrust it.

In circles not so exalted she doesn't for a minute depend on sympathy so far as women are concerned. The thoroughbred woman will always help another of her sex; the woman who has made her way by her wits has no use for the one who can't or doesn't. She never gets as far as her brother in the game; she plays up too hard when near the finish, and is always being dropped back into oblivion. Her greed is her bane, her curse.

She is like some of the beggars abroad who, fingering the sixpence you have given, stand with hungry eyes on your

purse where gold shows through. She has been known to eat two dinners within three hours because the second dinner, like the first, was a gift and she couldn't let it get by.

And she is the same way about everything; acquaintances, opportunity for personal exploitation, admiration, anything that calls attention to her as an It—she, to put it plainly, makes a fool of herself over it and is speedily sized up at her worth or lack of worth. But some of us she hoodwinks all the time.

There are a few of these women who have achieved rather remarkable results. One of them happened to have a literary name. She went after fame—she bragged and boasted and told lies; she made acquaintances that would help; she talked the "great-hearted" patter that stands for so much; she pushed her way.

Her first book was written by a newspaper man, who fell in love with her and who, thrown over when his work for her was done, gave up the secret. But in all her doings she showed her expertness as a Becky Sharp. She gained confidence, managed to live without a cent as a guest of others; used their purses, their homes, their friends just so long as she could. Finally she landed where she wished to be and probably hooks no more.

Some of these modern Rebeccas start from dance halls and the caps and aprons of fifth rate lunch rooms, but like Rhoda and her pagoda they never hint at such a thing when they are clawing their way up the rungs. One great move is to get a room at one of the big hotels.

Mrs. B— has an apartment where she entertains sometimes ten or a dozen at breakfast. How does she do it? Someone sends her all these delicacies, wines, etc. She has the knack of getting things. And she uses these things to cultivate others who will procure still greater ones.

One day you hear she has gone to *the* great hotel to live.

How does she do it?

Well, she grew tired keeping house. Entertaining was so expensive. Now she pays for her room, and of course she

is invited to luncheon and dinner so much that she really doesn't have such large bills. Her meals cost her nothing. Somebody lets her use a machine for shopping and calling. She is what is called "clever."

She will even save up her telephone calls until she gets in the rooms or the offices of someone who has an instrument installed, and then she takes out her list and proceeds to clean it up—long-distance calls, social hellos to acquaintances here and there, appointments with dressmakers, dentists and manicures—it is a mark of her greediness that she is so keen on the immediate gain that she never thinks how she may be killing herself with that particular 'phone owner by overdoing the play.

Thus she wears the edge of her art. The man Hooker never does. He studies the shades and lights; the cues for disappearing, quitting, escaping through hedge, making way. He is quick to scent a rebuff. The lady Hooker is constantly getting the gate. She knows the game but she plays it without study and thought. She is no judge of distance, of form, of the psychological moment. She boasts too much and antagonizes other women. By and by her friends are all men.

Yet she gets. Her rooms, her person, all display her power at magnetizing things in her direction. So and So sent her this beautiful tea set. Wasn't it nice? Someone else keeps her in candies and fruit. How perfectly lovely it is to have friends!

You look in vain for the charm, the grace, the disposition that might win such tribute. It is simply a drag. She trains people to it, and will have none of those who fail to take the trail and bring up their burnt offerings, their myrrh and frankincense.

Of late she has taken up some of the religious and mental sciences, that gain her entrance into new fields, certain of them extremely lucrative ones. She goes in for the New Think ideas, or pretends to do so.

She bends the theories to suit her own particular needs in a most amusing way.

One of the convenient things about so many of the new religions is that they practically expurgate the Ten Commandments.

A group of these New Think Hookresses got hold of a book containing a star diagram which represented the psychology of the human being. The center, indicated by the dotted lines, was to be imagined as a soul liquid, so to speak, the All-Good in us. The many points of the star were the various channels through which we have a chance to radiate—love, good cheer, faith, hope, charity, encouragement, kindness—all the virtues.

The moment we cease to give out, the star points thicken up and corrode, the pool of All-Good dries up. This was a great success with these girls. It was like putting religion into a fashion plate.

One of them borrowed it from the other. She kept it a year, until she was forced to give it up. The star diagram had been taken out. The first girl was indignant. Every consistent Hooker hates to lose anything. And if Hookers are beginning to rob each other, where shall we all come out?

She asked the third girl if it wasn't a mean, horrid thing for the borrower to have taken out the page. The third one took a different view.

"No, I don't think so," she chirped. "She simply recognized her own, and she took it when she saw it."

The serious-minded person may ask where the importance of the Hooker comes in. Beyond adding to the gaiety of chop houses and cafés, how does he or she count?

Not in the amount of loot obtained, surely. But as they mow their way they cut down good qualities in others; kill generosity, hospitality, belief in things generally. All over the world—every second, the Hooker will tell you—there are born numbers of men and women who, through circumstances, environment, blood, have no part whatever in the Hooker gospel.

They delight to set out their feasts, great and small. They offer you a bite of their apple, and never yip even when

you leave them only the core. They give you their easiest chair and a cushion at your back. They listen to your tale of woe. They dry your tears and pin roses in your hair so that you may be happy.

The Hookers and their mates kill off these modern saints and leave in their places grim-lipped persons who have learned to count the spoons. One such man or woman is originally worth a dozen of the kind that prey. It would be lovely if they could withstand the con-

tact and go on bravely giving up their faiths and their illusions just as they give up their material possessions to be made into doormats for the others.

This would be what is called the Christian spirit. Some call it mere yappishness. But isn't it better to avoid these reactions by simply throwing up the sponge and learning to play the same game? Learn it just as one learns bridge, or squash, or aviating or skeeing? Learn to be a Hooker. And may be the best one win!



BALLAD OF THE YIELDED KISS

By Ethel Allen Murphy

BETWEEN the rose of sunset
 And the silver of the moon,
 When the gleam was on the grasses
 And the dew was on my shoon,
 I met my love a-trysting,
 And he craved of me a boon.
 I doubt me now, oh, lasses,
 If 'twas right to yield so soon,
 But I yielded and I kissed him—
 And ever since I've missed him,
 Between the rose of sunset
 And the silver of the moon.

I met my love a-trysting
 (Ah, my love beyond compare!)
 When the gleam was on the grasses
 And the glow was on his hair,
 And I could not then deny him
 With his tender, pleading air.
 Now no more at eve he passes
 Through the sunset light so fair—
 And I would I had not met him,
 For I cannot now forget him,
 And still my heart goes trysting,
 For my love beyond compare.



QUICK temper is an illumination in honor of wounded self-esteem.

THE IMAGE

By Irma Kraft

RIDICULOUS—isn't it—to begin a story with a description of a sunset? No experienced story writer would do it. And yet if a sunset had got into your mind and your heroine's mind so fixedly—what could you do but write it out? And wish and hope and pray; and get up at night to see whether you hadn't written something just a little bit better than Meredith, Baudelaire or Eleanor Hallowell Abbott; or outclassed every alma mater graduate genius from Theodore Kremer to the stunning one in the first act of "The Great Divide." I say, wouldn't you take *pride* in doing it? So much for the apology; and now for the sunset!

At five P. M. Lorley had given the St. Clair girl an antipyrine, had taken her temperature and administered a gentle alcohol rub; had brought milk and crackers to the Williams man and had tempted old Mrs. McCarter with a bit of custard sent up from the Homestead Tuberculosis Association luncheon; had seen that the five "out patients" were securely tucked up from the early November rawness, and then had scuttled away for a chat with a sunset.

Being in entire charge of a struggling young sanitarium has unsuspected advantages. It gives one undisputed twilight hours. Had there been other nurses or even assistants (aside from a meaningless orderly who doesn't count), or a cook whose soul was in her skillet, or a wash-lady who nursed a perennial grievance against an economical board—had there been anybody except these rather uninteresting bits of sub-strata, Lorley might have been tempted into converse away from mountain sides. But when your

day has been crowded with reminiscences from hopelessly tubercular patients, orders from over-busy doctors, conferences with an under-average cook, you, too, would be apt to welcome the brain firing tingle of a departing sun. And so Lorley slid very gratefully down into the tall grass of a Pennsylvania hill.

Away off to the left rose madder, orange clouds piled thick upon each other in fused splendor. Below, long darts of salmon fought hard with streaks of chilling gray. Lorley laughed with the sun, became tender with the clouds, grew pensive with the sky. Great clumps of amber are undeniably exciting. They made her think of balls and parties, of bare shoulders, stunning evening dresses, black-coated, white-shirt-fronted partners—of "The Pink Lady" and Sunday supplement pictures of Palm Beach—of scenes of Venice, Newport, Atlantic City, New York. They reminded her that somewhere in the world were good times, gondolas, shaded lamps, meringue glacés—and whispered, soft "I love you's."

A while she laughed on with them. And then, inevitably, as the amber shredded out into the gray, she relaxed into the inertia following nervous-edged excitement. Fast fading gold of cloud now pressed upon her as the high spots of her girlhood, oncoming gray of sky as the flat plane of her womanhood. With involuntary perception she realized how fast fleeting the gold, how long and life-enduring the gray.

Around the edge of the hill came the sharp cough of the Williams man, the clamp-clamp of Stephens putting away the St. Clair girl's chair, the chair which she might never again sag down on the

long "out patients" porch—the hawking and spitting of Dan Flannagan over his recently acquired American "scrap."

Lorley slid down into the tall grass and began to cry. A mute, deprecating, half-muffled cry which broke itself up into apologetic little sobs.

In a few minutes Dr. Burton lifted her up, head and hands and all, and let her sob it out on his knees. He hadn't needed a Rhodes scholarship to tell him when to be silent. Looking down at Lorley through thick glasses, he very much admired her sobbing. He even permitted himself the luxury of stroking her hair. But then Dr. Burton was very skilled in his treatment of the little illnesses of the human heart.

When he saw she had reached the stage where she didn't know whether she was sobbing on a man's knees or her mother's shoulder, he lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it—ever so gently.

"Try to stop, dear," he said; "it's bad for you."

"I—I know—I oughtn't to—but I just ca-a-n't help it."

"It's being too much alone—I predicted it. I've *told* that board you can't go on being up here alone." The Doctor continued to punctuate his remarks by gentle hand-implanted kisses.

"It— isn't that; just—things, I guess," Lorley wailed.

"Couldn't you tell me? Couldn't perhaps I help—a little?" And this time the bashful Doctor got as far as Lorley's forehead. Lorley sat up quickly.

"Why—Burty—you mustn't! I'd never've thought it of you—of all people—you!" An alluringly childish smile battled with a thin glaze of tear which continued to wander unromantically down her thin nose.

"Didn't you like it?" the Doctor questioned gravely.

"Ye-es, but—"

"But what?"

"It's so—naughty."

"Nothing particularly naughty about kissing the girl you—love."

"Oh—oh—Burty—you mustn't—you never have." Fingers in both ears, Lorley appeared an elusive hamadryad to a persistent Hylas.

"You have always seemed—interested," the Doctor assured himself gravely.

"It isn't—interest." Lorley spoke, ears tight closed.

"And I mayn't assume—it's love—"

"Oh, no, Burty; you know it isn't."

"But you just said it was—nice—"

"It was awf'ly—simply darling. I'd love it—all over again." Lorley was definitely impossible.

The Doctor took off his glasses and wiped away the frost.

"Burty—dear—it isn't right to let you—when I'm not in love with you—not really—" Lorley groped for a way to brighten words which would make the grave eyes graver still. Burty sat quiet.

"And yet you liked—" he repeated.

"Of course, a lot; but you know—don't you see, being blue and alone—Oh, I don't need to tell you what the blue devils mean—so far away from things up here—and just everything—" Lorley finished lamely, quite unable to face the pain in Burton's eyes.

"Then kissing—has nothing to do with love—with you, I mean?" he questioned sharply.

"Oh, yes—a lot—the dearest, friendliest kind of a love. Burty, Burty, dear, if we *only* lived in a time when we could kiss *everybody* we loved—a time before these hand-embroidered conventions—Now you *do* understand what I mean—don't try to make me explain—you *do*."

"Perfectly—also that you have not given me the reason—why you won't marry me." The Doctor spoke quietly, but Lorley knew that only once in ever so often he laid bare his heartbeats.

"Not that way, Burty; it isn't that way—don't make me say it—don't!"

"It is—exactly that way—exactly the way the girl I love—exactly the way the girl I'm going to— Dear little hand," he said, grasping it, "dear, helpful little hand! Lorley, you love me exactly the way the girl I'm going to marry—" Even an English doctor's finger tips can tingle with primitive Edenesque passion.

"But—I'm—married—already!"

"Miss—Kent—Miss? Lorley Kent—"

"My own name; I couldn't bear—to keep his any longer."

The Doctor stared at the now willingly

released fingers, through which the tears were trickling.

Eternities become adjusted in a moment. Ages pass and we face an undreamed angle of existence. Hope, outraged, totters, crumples, then rears its spirit, seeking a new and untried egress.

"Dear—girl—" Burton patted a trembling shoulder. "But you're—free?"

"I'm not, Burty; I'll never be—morally, I mean—because, you see, I still love him." Lorley was off again, far off, around the broken edge of hill.

The Doctor studied her carefully; analyzed the fearless eyes, the tender, passionate, impulsive mouth. "You're a contradiction," he said quietly, "because, whoever he is, you *don't* love him."

"But, dear"—Lorley grew eager, impelled by the necessity for truth—"listen. Just because you've never seen me like this, just because I'm always laughing, keeping the poor, old T.B.'s jollied up—just because I've never spoken about him, oh, Burty, you mustn't think a woman can't hide—"

"No woman of your temperament, no woman of your quality"—the Doctor spoke with authority—"continues to care for a man whom she doesn't respect."

"But she does—I do—it's something I can't reason about—don't ask me to reason. You see, however much he's been and done—and oh, dear, he *has* done a plenty—however much it is, I haven't stopped—caring; perhaps because I feel as much of it was my fault—so very much."

"So you're mixing a sense of responsibility, remorse, perhaps, a lot of extraneous emotions with the one vital—Don't you want me to talk about it—dear?" The Doctor apostrophized a face hidden between twisted fingers.

"Oh, yes, ever so—I've always wanted to tell you—always afraid to begin; but"—Lorley's face was now quite colorless—"this is just *one* thing you mustn't ask me to reason."

"Whatever your motives for separation—"

"Divorce," Lorley volunteered. "Absolute divorce."

"Whatever they were," the Doctor continued gently, "if you had continued to care for him, you would not now be sitting calmly on this hillside talking to me. You would be trailing around after him—all over the earth—"

"I don't know—where he is."

"You'd find him; and, to go back to the beginning, you'd never have let him go."

"I couldn't help it—there was pride, you see; whatever our love feelings for a man—there's always pride—when he seems to have gotten tired of us; but don't you understand—that doesn't alter our feelings—for him?"

"And you still delude yourself that you care?"

A wordless nod—for answer.

"But listen, Lorley—just a minute—can't you see you've got an unhealthy point of view—an infection in your imagination—you're nursing a melancholia—can't you see you're feeding an illness in your mind? It's all in your mind."

"It's all everywhere." Oh, Burty—"the wail was a half-laugh, half-sob—"it's all so many things mixed up—so many kinds of feeling—but it's all living, aching, real—a sort of mother sentiment for a boy, whom perhaps I didn't have patience with—a remorse for insisting that we go to the city. You don't know, you see, how contented he was living in the country—how excited with his plans for cooperative farming. It was I—I who wanted to get started in big things, city things; and when we got there it was all too much for him—the streets, the excitement, the competition. He tried a good many different jobs—finally newspaper work—that took him into out-of-the-way districts. It was all too much, the unexpected excitements, the temptations, the *unprepared-for* temptations—"

"But I know you—Lorley; you gave him more than one chance—"

"Perhaps—but not many enough—or patiently enough. I couldn't see then that it might only have been the sudden—"

ness of city life— Oh, I know you'll say a man isn't a man until he's faced the acid test—but don't you know, women, too, Burty—unless they've been trained—immured—taught to *think* a certain way—women, too, often go down under that same acid test. And here was this boy—"

"You didn't leave until you were sure there wasn't a chance?"

"Until there didn't seem to be—I think—now."

"Wait a minute: did he ever come after you—try to follow you?" In a gentler tone: "Provide for you?"

"No-o, he wouldn't. He wasn't aware—he wasn't *conscious* of the terrible things he'd done. And I left just when he needed me—when it was easiest for him to go on—hardest for him to pull out—when he needed me most to help him fight."

"I—don't believe the woman a man is married to—can ever help him fight—certain things." This slowly, falteringly, tenderly.

"But I should have tried—I should have tried—I should have tried—"

"I see"—the Doctor spoke half to himself—"and her feelings won't change until she disabuses herself of this sense of responsibility."

An attempted interruption.

"Just a minute, Lorley. I'm not asking you to do this for me, but for yourself—your whole future. I want you to try to realize that you've set up an image, a distorted emotional image—you've set it up 'way back in your brain—a substitute for the reality—the definite truth. You're living with that image! If you would only say to yourself, day after day, over and over and over: 'That man is not worth caring for who doesn't seek me, who doesn't feel his duty to me, who doesn't know any sentiment for me'—if you would only say these words over and over—if you would feed your brain as you would your body with a regularly repeated medicine, or if," struck by a sudden thought, "something could happen to smash the image—"

"Nothing ever—will." This with the conviction of youth.

"It's been a long time? Tell me, Lorley; I want to help you."

"Five years."

"Five years that you've been 'sick'—that you've been pandering to this melancholia—because, my dear, it's in your *mind*; all the passions and projects and crimes of the universe—and most of the diseases—lie in the mind."

"When I care so dreadfully—just dreadfully?"

The plain-thinking Doctor pulled himself together.

"About that St. Clair case—" he added, rising.

"Ye-es." Lorley rose, too, crumpling a sodden ball of handkerchief into a flapping pocket. "I don't think she's good for more than a few days," as they took the path together back to the sanitarium.

"Been giving her phenacetine constantly?"

"Constantly."

"Change it to codine—it sometimes reacts more quickly. And the Williams man?"

"Improving, but—oh, ever so slowly."

"I'll have a look at all of them—though there isn't much one can do."

Back on the porch Dan Flannagan greeted Dr. Burton with all the idolatry of a sinner who has found a redeemer. Bursting in Hibernian enthusiasm, he reiterated his delight in the "Durham." Lorley waited patiently while the Doctor detailed its advantages over the abominable "scrap" which the old man had patronized for a lifetime, and caught rays of bubbling happiness as Burton produced a new packet with unbroken seal. A few feet away the Williams man stopped calculating just how much longer his family could scrape along on his bank residue, and listened eagerly to the discussion of relative merits of Irish, English and American tobaccos. So does the ragged edge of suffering dull itself on the incidents of existence. The great, long fingers of the plague knot themselves into the brain, forcing its attention away from salient issues into the tiny trifles of mere living. A letter becomes a lifework, the advent-

of a friend a climax, the changing of tobaccos a catastrophe.

The Williams man, Dan Flannagan and the St. Clair girl were Dr. Burton's special cases, and unconsciously they had grown to absorb the maximum of Lorley's attention. With Dan Flannagan, the victim of hereditary tuberculosis, encouraged by very much hard living, she had long since ceased to hope for change. She knew it was merely a question of how long he would take to stumble over the steps to the waiting harbor. But she loved to talk with the old man, whose rich nature flaunted optimism in the face of lonely and forsaken suffering.

With the Williams man it was very different. Taken, without warning, from a life of unusual temperance, the sickness had sought him out, perhaps for his very defiance of the need of rest due nature. A young father, he had been hurling the bulwarks of his body into the struggle for a home, overstraining to its last pitiful power every God-given capability; until nature, outraged, had flung back his broken efforts in his face. Lorley and Dr. Burton had long known this case to be worthy their most serious vigilance; and today the renewed interest of the Williams man in the family finances had been the most hopeful sign in months.

But for the St. Clair girl Lorley reserved her most curiously aroused attention. There was that about her slazy eyes, her red, fever-cracked lips, her wasted breast, which stirred the nurse inexpressibly. In the slanting eyes, the fear of the wounded animal, in the shifting hands, the mute protest against destiny, in the restless body, the fear of—yesterday—today—tomorrow.

And yet at the unvarying "Ain't you never gonna get me outa here?" which greeted nurse and doctor on their entrance to the sick room, she responded to a temporary aversion which the St. Clair girl often aroused in her. And the "What the blazes am I to do with myself?" completed the transition from sentimentalism to reality.

"What would you suggest, Miss St. Clair?" Burton's fingers closed around

her faltering pulse, while his eye sought the detailed chart hanging near the bed.

"Lord—anything but this old milk diet. Milk and crackers—milk and crackers—milk and crackers—so much milk slop—I couldn't look a dairy in the face!"

"Now aren't you a foolish little girl to talk this way? Let me see—the chart says: 'Appetite normal—Rest fair.' Means improvement right along, now—"

"Oh, I guess, Doctor, I'm a piker, an' you an' Miss Kent have been awful good to me, better'n I ever thought folks'd be again, but you know I want to get out, and you can guess where—where—" she breathed, snatching her wrist from the Doctor's sensitive fingers.

He regained it quietly. "No—you don't. Your eyes don't say what your mouth does; your eyes say you like it with us very much—that you want to stay with us." A certain thought wave of confidence often passes between a healthy doctor and a hopeless patient, a certain transfusion of cheer. The St. Clair girl lay passive in the bed.

"You do like it here—you've told me so often." Lorley tucked deftly at the lamb's wool comfort, while the sick girl followed her every move with a curious tenacity.

"Of course I do, but can't I guess I'm done for? Where'd I go if I was cured up?"

"Just you forget all about that. Help us get you well. We'll find something for you to do—something different perhaps than you've known about before—" The Doctor was sterilizing his thermometer.

"Ain't nothin' else—not now." Her face turned to the wall as that of Goethe's Marguerite might have before her ascension—as Joan's after the trial.

"But you are going to get well—say it—think it—dream it—" Burton welcomed the diversion of arranging codine on the three-cornered glass shelf opposite, which he'd had built there to be out of reach of the desolate world-end moments in the bed.

"I heard that psalm singing stuff so often," she droned. "Couldn't you,

now, just give me the truth—about how long it'll be—how long it'll all take—you know?"

Lorley, lowering the windows against the dews of night, could feel the girl's eyes pleading, pleading for truth.

"You must not ask me these things, Miss St. Clair—and you *must* believe you are going to get well. Say it over and over: 'I'm going to get well—I'm going to get well—I'm going to get well'."

"I'm—going—to get—well. Sounds peachy, don't it? Miss Kent—say it, too, with me, won't you—please?"

"Yes," said the Doctor, "say it with her—please."

"I'm—going—to—get—well." Lorley's lips moved slowly, painfully.

"That's better." Dr. Burton smiled down at the two women—then turned abruptly away and went into the outer office.

There he voiced his fears. "You noted that temperature?"

"Yes, but she's reacted so often."

"Nevertheless, you've got to be prepared—these last signals of distress! Give her another alcohol rub about eight; if she doesn't respond properly, a camphor and olive oil injection. You've got oxygen on hand?"

"Surely, but you don't want me to give it—"

"Not without calling me—I fully expect to hear from you tonight. Remember at any hour you mustn't feel the slightest hesitation about ringing me up."

"But she may rally; she has often, and I simply hate to fool you up that hill again."

"How about you—up here alone?"

"Please don't worry about me." Again Lorley sensed the dangerous edge of personalities. "I can manage beautifully, and Stephens—"

"No better than a clown—I shall insist at the next board meeting—"

"Very well, if it'll relieve *your* mind," she laughed, "but do remember, Burty, it's just the sort of work I've been looking for—always wanted—a splendid position of responsibility—a feeling that all these lives are looking to me—de-

pending on me for safety. Don't you see, it's the nearest a person ever gets to having confidence in himself, this wanting to measure up to things when they come—big things, I mean!"

(And Lorley wondered why the Doctor loved her.)

"Start Williams on meat broths tomorrow," he said abruptly. "He's making a good record, but we've got to watch—very—very carefully."

"Splendid, isn't it? Stunning to send him back, all cured, to wife and kiddies—he's got a dear wife and cunning kiddies."

"Excellent—if we can do it." But the Doctor's eyes sought the nurse's with an illness quite peculiarly their own. "I expect that call from you tonight; you won't hesitate?"

"Not for a minute—if I need you"—a fluttering, handkerchiefed farewell around the broken edge of hill.

Far away in the valley the gray blanket of evening unwrapped and spread itself. Up on the hilltop all seemed peace and plenty. The sturdy brown sanitarium stood aloof from a preoccupied world, bent on comforting its fragile heartbeats, concealing its bent hopes and jagged fears.

From the kitchen curled the huddling smoke of domesticity, from the washline the warm, forgotten coverings of couch and chair, from the bedrooms the white, burning lamps of comfort. Tender, mute, unspeaking symbols of what a new-awakened economic conscience aims to shower on the heads of its unknowing victims.

For the next hour Lorley's duties seemed unending. Temperatures to be taken and recorded, bed coverings to be added or removed. A sharp tussle with cook over milk which must or must not be heated; the inevitable altercation with Stephens on the subject of incessant ventilation; arguments with the patients themselves under the heading of necessary caution. The hurried, worried supper of her own while meat and potatoes were seasoned by nervous visits to the St. Clair girl's bedroom, or followed by her faltering, jagged cough.

And deep underneath all—the memory of the pain in Burty's eyes as he had left her on the hilltop.

By nine o'clock the patients had slumped into their accustomed quiet. Lorley, with head steeped in cold water, cap and apron freshened, and nerves fortified by black coffee, had finished the St. Clair girl's treatment. She seemed a bit easier as the nurse hastened to the window to get her first peep of night. They came to her as signs of friendship, these gleaming settlement lights so far below. Down from the side of the hospital the hill dropped a sheer thousand feet—and Lorley loved to lean far out and watch the city as it sputtered up in twinkles. Tonight the stars replied in sister twinkles. Lamp-light and homes below—starlight and peace above—and Lorley poised between—a restless, disconnected, uncertain bit of womanhood.

The St. Clair girl lay in an odd detached tranquillity. She had responded readily to the codine, and her cheeks reflected a shade more healthy color. Lorley, waiting at the window, knew that in a few moments she would amble into a motley and highly jumbled past, and it was with peculiar distaste that she turned to rearrange the crumpled bed.

"One—two—three; one—two—three; one—two—three; one—one—Keep on movin', Charlie; they ain't payin' us to be statues. One—two—three—Charlie—now you've got it—yep—we've got to do it over—we want the big time, don't we? Well, how we gonna get it unless we give 'em the real stuff? One—two—three; one—"

The nurse treated the discourse with a silence she had hitherto found adequate. Resting her arms on the window ledge, she searched for Burty's rush-light, far away in the valley.

"Of course I'm back in the game, Mr. Bernheim—and going to stay in it, too. This fixin' up a dove-cote ain't all it's cracked up to be. One—two—three; one—two—three; one—two—three; one—Don't be a funeral, Charlie—aw, come on over here—come on. Now don't get huffy—we'll never land anything if you won't practise."

Lorley shook the patient gently. "Listen—Eva—I'm not Charlie; I'm your nurse, Miss Kent, and this isn't the stage—it's your room where you're resting. Come, dear, you must try to go to sleep."

"Sleep—sleep—" The sick girl was bewildered. "Yes'm, I'll try—but this ain't my room—it's too clean."

A knock on the wall from the Williams man gave Lorley the respite she craved. Returning, she found the patient gasping, and finger tips showing a dangerous pale edge of blue. Quick with the olive oil treatment, followed by a powerful dose of camphor, she had the satisfaction of reviving rose of fingers and stronger beat of heart.

Sigh after sigh soon followed in quick succession. "It's over, I tell you, Bernheim—it's over; I can't do it—I can't go on with the act—I'm done for. Something's gone—it's over—"

Clenching the arms of a hard pine rocker, Lorley found herself wishing it were over. The nerve-racking strain of the past few nights was registering itself on a weakened will power. Query: "Why must she save her—why—why?"

The sick girl rambled on. The nurse, unmoving, watched a whitish pallor creeping up about her lips.

"Well, if you want to know the truth, Charlie—if you must have it—I was engaged—of course it was Ches—you know Ches Kingwood—yes, Mr. Chester Kingwood—"

"God!" On her knees beside the bed, the nurse caught the sick girl's hand in both of hers. "Say that name again, Eva!" she breathed. "Say it again—for me, dear—just for me!" But with a helpless flutter of the eyelids, the little dancer lay quiet on the pillow.

Down the narrow hall to sleeping orderly and oxygen tank seemed an eternity. The lips which before had prayed for a quick ending prayed now only for time for a beginning. Lorley pulled Stephens and the tank with fevered energy into the bedroom.

"Want I should call the Doctor?" Stephens was fumbling with sleepy fingers and twisted tubes while Lorley

lowered the sick girl gently from her flat pillow on the bed.

"No—no time—can't spare you—pump." She held the broken, inert body carefully while Stephens pumped life-giving oxygen into the shattered lungs.

In the white room two spirits struggled—two spirits from the world we halt at, and Lorley prayed that she might keep the girl in the world she'd found so difficult.

Five minutes of a pregnant silence—five æons for a soul to balance, trembling, uncertain, undecided; then with a tired murmur Eva relaxed in Lorley's arms—protecting.

"She's some better—want I should call the Doctor now?" Stephens was untwisting tubes.

"No—no need; but you wait up—outside. I want to fix her. If you hear me call, come—but not unless— No, leave the tank. Yes—here."

"Sure, but don't you worry, Miss Kent; she's good for a new term; they don't give up so quick. Shouldn't I call the Doctor? He said to—"

"Never mind what he said; I *don't* want Dr. Burton dragged up here again. You wait outside." But as Stephens shuffled from the room, Lorley feared he'd noted her unusual excitement.

Very tenderly she moistened brow and lips, very tenderly counted heartbeats in the fragile wrist.

After a long hour the girl opened her eyes.

"What's the tank for?" she inquired weakly.

"Oh, Eva—I'm so glad you're feeling better."

"Sure—but what's the tank for—I been bad again?"

On her knees beside the bed Lorley whispered.

"Listen, Eva, talk low—you like me, Eva—you like me a little, don't you, dear?"

"Sure, lots." Eva patted her nurse's hands, now picking, weakly picking, at the coverlet.

"Then I want you to tell me—oh, you've just had a bad spell—and I've

no right to be talking to you at all—" She spoke with sudden buried eyes.

"That's all right—don't make any difference about me—you just talk all you want, honey—I'm never gonna tell."

The nurse was groping through dim years of reticence. Impalpable shadows clustered in her brain cells, fogging the powers which should shape a name. Then—"I want you to tell me about Chester Kingwood," she said.

"Chester Kingwood—Chester Kingwood—Ches Kingwood— Was I talking about him—before?"

"Yes; you said you'd been—engaged to him."

"Engaged—yep—almost married. Oh, Miss Lorley, it's putting me back in hell to make me talk about it—but if you want—"

Silence.

"You *do* want? I'll try. It was on the big time—down at the Orpheum—I met him. He liked my stunt—did the usual—you know, flowers and candy and things; but I was keen on his looks—I thought he was different—couldn't just say how—but from the first minute he wanted me to give up the stage. I was for him—and happy! Eating cream puffs for breakfast with the wingy feeling every girl has when she knows she's gonna get married. Can't explain it, can you? Nobody could that little singing inside of your head when you know somebody wants you for his—always. I broke off with Charlie—he was my dancing partner, see? Left him right in the middle of the season—rummy thing to do, hey? But there was Ches all in a blue funk to get married, so I took my savin's out from the Pittsburgh National—I'd put 'em there so I couldn't get at 'em easy—an' I started sewin' and fixed everything ducky and darlin'! You should have seen the cretonne curtains I made to match everything in the flat—we hadn't quite rented it because I'd loaned some of my savin's to Ches to put in the new business he was starting—but oh, those days when we were plannin' everything—an' I was sewin' everything from the ground up—"

The figure by the bed moved slightly.
"What happened?"

"Aw, can't you guess? I was the original Vesta Victoria understudy—waitin' at the church. My financier went West with my nestegg fixed safe in case of a hold-up, and left me a cute note sayin' the stuff was off. I cried enough handkerchiefs to boom a laundry, then went back—and danced my way—here."

Down by the side of the bed Lorley was wondering what was life.

"Say, just what was that guy to you, anyhow? Couldn't you tell me—please, Miss Lorley?"

Shaking shoulders for answer.

"Maybe you think I'm worryin' about him, still? Lordy—no; just my rotten luck to have run into him—I know there's lots better in the world. Say, Miss Lorley, you ain't settin' any store by him? No—you couldn't be—oh, dearie, excuse me for sayin' it—you're just worryin' over me. Dearie, dearie—you couldn't be thinking of him—you couldn't be—now?"

No answer.

"If I could only make you know what sort of a rotter he was! Think of it, Miss Lorley, a man that'd be engaged

to a girl just to get her money—a man that'd do a thing like that—" A vestal virgin could bring no greater sacrament to the service of her deity than Eva surrendering her sorrow. "If I could only make you see!" she whispered.

Down by the side of the bed the nurse was trying to piece out life.

Back in her brain, far, far back—where no voluntary thought of hers could reach, back in the bedrock of consciousness where life-giving principles and life-sustaining values are founded, an image crashed. Lorley could feel the gradual crumbling, the gradual pitiful disintegration of a mirage. As the features of the image changed from healthy, young and rounded lips to faltering, weakened smiles, she clutched the bed in terror. The emotions which had pandered to the image rose up and fought the reason which was clamoring for its downfall.

"Gee! I guess you're mad at me—I didn't mean no harm," Eva whispered.

After a long, long while, Lorley raised her head. "You've been very good to me," she answered. "Now you just try to go to sleep."



HEARTSEASE

By Clifford Evans Van Hook

MY heart hath sung a song of thee,
A little wistful lay,
It echoes, oh, so tenderly,
Throughout my night and day.

So sweet it is, this song of thee,
My heart, which gave it birth,
Still trembles with the ecstasy
That knows no thought of earth.

Of all the songs my heart hath sung,
This song, it seemeth me,
Hath come at last to ease the ache
Of yearning utterly.

SONOMA

By Witter Bynner

"I WAITED in Sonoma, where he said that he would be,
And I looked among the faces for his face,
But nowhere could I find the light, the only light I see,
And Sonoma was a solitary place.

"Oh, where is my beloved? He has vanished with the evening,
I can find his shadow setting, in the sun, below the hill.
He has laughed with me and touched me and his eyes were straight
upon me—
And the fire of his hand is on me still.

"Have I never really seen him? Was he never really there?
Were his quiet eyes the motion of a star?
Was it leaves and lights around me when I leaned to breathe his
hair?
Were his kisses only aches that never are?

"Oh, where is my beloved? He is absent from the morning,
Yet I find him far off, rising, in the sun upon the hill.
Oh, where is my beloved? He is nowhere in Sonoma.
But the fire of his face is on me still."



SYMBOLS

By Edna Valentine Trapnell

LIFE is a smile and then a frown—
Life is a bough of blossoms rare
And fragrant in a sun-kissed air,
And then a branch all bare and brown.

Life is at last a memory:
Bare boughs in cheery hearth fires glow;
And from the withered bloom shall grow
The perfume of the potpourri.

THE WHITE BOY

By Albert Payson Terhune

THE Arareek Country Club declared it was a crying shame. It was the first time in mortal memory that the Arareek Club had been unanimous on anything.

He was so nice and so young. And she—well, the women crossed both those adjectives from her name. And while the men were vociferous in granting her the former of the two, they were a trifle hazy as to her right to the latter.

But Lloyd himself would never have stooped to use such banal terms as "nice" and "young" in thinking of Mrs. Garth. He would as soon have thought of calling the Milo comely and the Medici cute.

He was twenty-three. And he was earning his own living. For nearly two years he had been in business. And in the fall he was to be put in the manager's office at forty dollars a week.

Lloyd had his evenings and Saturdays to himself that summer, and an occasional spare holiday. There was much to do, of course, in leisure hours. And most of Lloyd's summer activities, like those of Pompton's other comfortably situated folk, had the Arareek Club for a center.

It was at the Arareek that he had met Mrs. Garth. She had come to Pompton sufficiently well introduced, and had taken the old Paulison place for the summer.

Lloyd was introduced to her at a club dance, where he had gone with his mother, his sister and the Girl. He had always thought of the Girl in capital letters. At half past ten that night, after his third dance with Mrs. Garth, the girl's name was mentally relegated to the lower case font: the girl—like that.

Mrs. Garth had the faculty of bringing out all that was best in a man. Lloyd admitted that himself. She did not chatter to him about tennis and niblicks and carburetors and E. H. Sothern and house parties and the Ideal Man, as did the girl (formerly the Girl) and the other girls.

She did not dance vehemently as if she adored it; she danced as though thereby she were making a graceful concession to the whims of others. Lloyd knew it would be all the same to her if she did not so much as taste the banal little dance supper. And Lloyd could see that she recognized him as a man of the world and instinctively treated him as such.

They sat out one dance in the moonlight, on the corner of the clubhouse veranda. She sat on a bench, and he, leaning with folded arms against a pillar, towered protectingly above her. She told him that the cross-light and his attitude made him look like the picture of Othello recounting his adventures.

She had a way of drawing a man out, too; and her powers of understanding were positively uncanny. When the girl chanced to walk past their corner, giving them a wistful, half-jealous glance in passing—she had no finesse, no experience with the real world—Mrs. Garth whispered:

"She cared?"

And Lloyd answered, tolerantly:

"She's a jolly little thing. I'm really very fond of her."

That night, on the homeward ride, Lloyd's mother and sister and the decapitalized girl had a spare seat in the car. Lloyd had walked home with Mrs. Garth, and then, in tight patent leather

dancing pumps, two miles in the mud to his mother's house.

A wonderful walk, for now he *knew*. He knew that his long years of restless heart hunger were at an end. Gone was his world weariness, his bitter and hard fought unfaith in life. He loved.

Other men loved, too. In fact, on scarce half of his daily calls did he have Mrs. Garth to himself. Sometimes there was one man there; sometimes a round half-dozen men were lounging on the Paulison house veranda, polluting the air she breathed with rank cigarette smoke.

He found himself wondering as to the late Mr. Garth: just how late he might have been, and whether Mrs. Garth mourned him beneath her brave gaiety, and if her heart lay in his grave. He rehearsed beautiful, tactful ways of leading up to the subject. And once he tried one of these lines of approach. Before he had spoken ten words she understood. She always understood. And she said something. Not very much. In fact, Lloyd could never recall her exact words about it. But he carried away an impression of a girlish union of convenience, a brief, loveless married life and a glad deliverance. He went home that night, at once relieved of a great fear and awed by the sense of having stood momentarily within the portals of a heart's tragedy.

Now, to keep such a courtship quiet in a place like Pompton presented about the same facile possibilities as an attempt to disguise the presence of a lighted match in a barrel of gunpowder. Wherefore, from grillroom to ladies' lounge, the Arareek Club hummed.

Lloyd's mother wept in secret. And publicly she greeted Mrs. Garth with a horrible smile of cordiality. And she flatly refused to discuss her at all with the indignant and puzzled Lloyd. As for Lloyd's sister—what do a man's sisters know of life and love and the world and the realities? She behaved as Lloyd had always expected so silly and blatant a girl would behave in such circumstances.

The girl—how long it seemed since those callow days when she had been the

Girl!—evidently had not taken his defection to heart at all. For she seemed gayer than ever before on the few occasions when chance brought them together. Lloyd was glad. Apparently he had not broken her heart.

There was a most regrettable and degrading and altogether exciting scene at the club one Saturday evening. Lloyd, after an early dinner, had been playing a set of tennis, to while away the time until it should be late enough to call on Mrs. Garth. At dusk he repaired to the shower and thence to the locker room to change into dinner jacket and other outward evidences of culture. Lately he had taken to dressing in the evening. Thousands of New York men did. And Mrs. Garth had spent all her girlhood in New York.

Tonight there were several in the locker room, changing from golf or tennis clothes into street costume. And among them was Dyson, a corpulent, swarthy, bald-headed person whom other men were foolish enough to like fairly well, despite his pernicious habit of calling in and out of season at Mrs. Garth's and of bothering her with attentions that any fool could see with half an eye were annoyingly unwelcome.

"We're looking for a fourth man for auction," called Dyson across the room. "Want to sit in, Lloyd?"

"Thanks," returned Lloyd freezingly; "I've an engagement."

Dyson mumbled something to the man nearest him. They both laughed. So did two other men who overheard.

"I didn't catch what you said, Mr. Dyson," called Lloyd, in a phenomenally steady if slightly high-keyed voice.

"Never mind, sonny," laughed Dyson; "you didn't miss much."

"Pardon me, Mr. Dyson," put in Lloyd, falling carelessly into D'Artagnan's most approved manner, "but I think you were speaking of me. And everyone around you laughed. May I have a share in the joke?"

"You *are* the joke, sonny," returned Dyson. "And if you don't see the point, you're the only person in Pompton that doesn't."

Lloyd, being in some respects quite

sane, knew that he and Mrs. Garth were being discussed from one end of the suburb to the other. Wherefore he quite realized the sort of joke Dyson must have perpetrated. The beast had actually dared to bring Mrs. Garth's name—indirectly at the very least—into a club locker room discussion.

Lloyd did not see red, as do people in stories. He saw nothing with any great distinctness. His mouth was dry and his palms moist. And then all at once he knew just how a man of the world ought to act in so delicate a crisis.

Walking calmly across the room to Dyson, he steadied his voice and said:

"Mr. Dyson, when I told you just now that I had an engagement, I did so to avoid playing cards with you."

"That's all right, son," replied Dyson good-naturedly. "We've got a fourth."

"I did not wish to play cards with you, Mr. Dyson," resumed Lloyd, his voice as thrillingly cold and deadly as that of Sir Nigel in like case, "because I don't soil my hands by playing with a slow card sharp. Is that sufficiently plain?"

Apparently it was. For, after a momentary gasp of crass disbelief in his own sense of hearing, Dyson howled aloud and made a dash at his white-faced accuser. Which, of course, was just what Lloyd had most ardently longed for.

Before the onlookers could separate the two, Lloyd's fist had found its mark, a softish, springy target, that scored the record of the clean hit by sending a spurt of red over Dyson's collar and silken shirtfront.

Then the peacemakers fluttered noisily and heavily down upon the two. Disregarding the scattered volley of questions and censure, Lloyd shook himself free of the detaining hands, struggled into his dinner jacket and left the clubhouse.

The cool of the dusk lay comfortingly on his burning face. He straightened his disarranged tie and headed toward the Paulison house. As his nerves relaxed and his head grew clear a sense of wild joy overwhelmed him. He, in these humdrum modern days of commerce,

had struck a blow for the fair name of the woman he loved. All men would know better another time than to speak lightly of Her.

Mrs. Garth was alone when Lloyd reached her house. She was lying in a hammock in a dark angle of the porch. And she was wearing something white and clinging that shimmered faintly in the dusk as she came forward to meet him. As her hand touched his, something in his heart told him that the psychological hour had struck. He must speak and at once.

His proposal was all ready. For weeks it had grown and shaped itself and had been pruned and polished until now it was a gem set in fire. And not only were the mere words coined to a point of utter perfection, but so was the pleading yet gloriously masterful manner that was to accompany them. He braced himself and spoke.

"Oh, Mrs. Garth!" he burred. "Will you marry me? You see, I love you. You must have known, and I—"

His last inspired words were spoken into Mrs. Garth's hair. For Lloyd had caught her in his arms. Having seized her, he was in grave doubt exactly what to do with her. So, with a dramatic gesture of self-abnegation, he recoiled and stood with folded arms in front of the woman. He was quivering from head to toe and he was breathing in uneven gasps.

He marveled at his own tempestuous daring. It was thus that women were won—by a cyclonic courtship. Hotspur had made love like this. So had Lovelace. A whirlwind wooing. It was irresistible. But what was the next move?

And so he stood, panting and shaking, looking down helplessly at the shimmering unruffled vision in the dusk before him. She raised a hand to her hair. Then she said gently:

"You love me?"

"Yes, oh, yes, Mrs. Garth. Didn't—didn't you know it?"

"Of course I did," she answered quietly. "And you want to marry me? You are quite sure?"

"Sure! As sure as I am that there is

no one in all this glorious universe like you. Oh, Mrs. Garth, say you will marry me!"

"You are very young," she ventured.

"But I have *lived*. Age is a matter of experience, not of years. I cannot offer you the first wild love of youth. But if the heart of a man that has suffered—"

"I know," she said; and there was caress and healing in her deep voice.

"And, Mrs. Garth," he pleaded, "you can learn to care for me just a little?"

"And you can learn my first name, perhaps?" she queried, with no trace of mockery. "To call me 'Mrs. Garth,' under the circumstances, seems just a little bit formal, doesn't it?"

For a horrible space he peered agonizingly at her in dread lest she were making fun of him. But he saw he was wrong. Her dimly seen face bore no flicker of merriment.

"What—what *is* your first name?" he asked timidly.

"Samantha."

Through the worldwide diapason of harmony shot a tiny discord. But he loyally beat it to silence beneath an avalanche of love.

"Can you learn to care for me—Samantha?" he managed to say.

"Of course," she answered pleasantly.

"You *mean* it?"

"Certainly. I think the world of you."

"In—in *that* way?"

"In the very best, most perfect way a woman like me can ever think of a b—man like you."

"And—and we're engaged?"

"Why, yes," she laughed, after the briefest flash of hesitancy. "Of course we are. You may kiss me if you care to."

"If I care to!"

And again he caught her up in his arms. But on the instant she broke lithely away from him and pointed toward the street. Two men were coming up the walk. Mrs. Garth sighed.

"I was hoping we could have this one evening all to ourselves," she whispered.

"Send them word you aren't at home!" he ordered fiercely.

"Too late. They will see us before I can hide. Go, dear. And—"

"I can come back in the morning? The first thing?"

"The first thing. At ten o'clock if you like."

He felt her lips brush his. Then she left him and moved forward out of the denser shadows. And Lloyd, in a bewildered dream, made his way past the callers and to the street.

It was done. They were engaged. She had said so. And—"Samantha"—well, what was the matter with "Samantha" for a name? When one said it the right way, it had a downright sweet sound—almost. Lloyd cursed himself for his disloyalty. It was just because he wasn't used to the name.

Lloyd got home somehow. He would not profane this first wonderful evening by telling his mother and sister about his engagement. His sister was certain to say something nasty. All the women in Pompton were abominably jealous of her. He could not even be certain how his mother would take the news.

Several young people were lounging on the porch when he reached home. Among them was the girl. She did not see Lloyd until he had almost passed her on his way to his room. Then she smote suddenly on a guitar that lay idle across her knees and broke a half-hour's stark silence with a burst of ragtime. She lacked repose. Lloyd wondered how he had ever fancied he cared. And, wondering, he passed on, carrying his dream with him.

After a night that ought to have been sleepless, Lloyd woke a full hour ahead of his usual Sunday morning rising time. And on the stroke of ten he was at Mrs. Garth's door.

A maid directed him to the library. Dismissing a picture of his sweetheart running radiant to the front door to meet him, Lloyd made his way to the room. Mrs. Garth rose from a seat in the bay window and came forward. Her back was to the light. She responded tenderly to his ardent greeting. Then, his arm about her waist, they went together to the window seat. As she sat down, the merciless north light from

the triple casement pouring over her, Lloyd stopped short and stared.

"Are you ill?" he asked in dismay.

"Why, no," she answered wonderingly. "Of course not. I never felt better in my life. Sit down, dear. When I lean back this way to look up at you, my rheumatism sends needles through my neck. What is the matter?"

For he was still staring open-mouthed.

"You *are* ill!" he declared. "I never saw you like this before."

"Few men have," she laughed, a little embarrassedly. "But now that we are engaged—"

"But," he stammered, "you are so pale!"

"I seldom have any color—especially in the morning."

"But whenever I've seen you—"

"Whenever you've seen me, I was ready to be seen."

"You don't—you don't mean you *pain*!" he cried, ashamed of his own words.

"My dear boy," she said patiently, "people 'painted' when it was a sin for woman to improve on Providence. Since then they simply 'make up.' Don't look so horrified, dear. It's no crime. I thought you knew—"

He scarce heard. He was looking from her undeniably sallow cheeks to the eyebrows whose arched blackness had seemed to him so nymphlike. The arch was gone. So was the blackness. Brown and somewhat scanty brows topped the pale-lashed eyes at whose corners the crow's feet were beginning to cluster. And above, a respectable but by no means remarkable head of hair replaced the shimmering masses of spun sunshine wherein his hot lips had so rapturously buried themselves but the evening before.

She was still pretty. There was nothing repulsive or even homely about her. She was merely a sweet-faced, vivacious woman of uncertain age—a woman whose face in a crowd might elicit a glance of tolerant approval, but assuredly, in its present guise, not a face to enslave the fancy of even a perfervid young man. She wore a not unbecoming gray morning dress, that,

however, portrayed angles rather than curves.

"Don't look so shocked, darling," she laughed. "When a woman gets to my age, tired nature needs a little kindly help."

"Gets to your age!" he repeated dazedly.

"Why, how old do you suppose I am?" she demanded.

"I—I supposed you were just a little older than I am, of course," he managed to say. "Not that that matters in love like ours. Souls know no age."

"My dear boy," she answered, "I was forty-two the tenth of last May."

"Forty-two!" The words were jerked from his lips.

"Forty-two. Just a month older than you once told me your mother is."

"My mother!"

"She married when she was eighteen, I think you said," went on Mrs. Garth. "If I'd done that I might have had a son just your age now. Isn't it queer to think of?"

"Don't!" he cried helplessly.

"But, as you say," she continued, unruffled, "ours is a soul love. And souls know no age. Yet," she added, a little wistfully, "time has left marks all over my face, marks I never fully realized till you looked at me just now."

"Time couldn't pass a face like yours without stopping to kiss it," replied Lloyd. He had read it in a book somewhere.

"You are a dear, dear boy!" she murmured. "And you are a gentleman. Perhaps you think gentlemen are plentiful in this sordid life of ours. Well, they aren't. I used to think so, too, till my divorce left me to shift for myself."

"Your *what*?"

"My divorce. I told you once—"

"I didn't understand. I thought he was dead."

"He? His sort never die. But I thought you understood. It isn't a nice story. Don't make me tell it."

"No," he reassured her eagerly, "don't tell it. Don't think of it any more. I can imagine it all. You were only a girl and your parents made you marry him. And he was a cur and

neglected you and ill-treated you until at last you couldn't bear it any longer. So you freed yourself from him. I honor you for doing it. I—"

"No," she denied wearily, "it wasn't that kind of a story. You wouldn't understand. And you wouldn't believe, you white, clean boy. By the way," voice and eyes hardening again, "what is your income? You told me once, I think, but I've forgotten. I don't like to speak of such matters, but naturally when I marry you my alimony will stop. It isn't much, only a hundred and fifty a week, but with a million economies and by denying myself the things I really want, I can scrape along on it without running too heavily into debt. So—"

"Your alimony!" he babbled.

"Yes. It isn't much, as I say. But it was only by a wonderful bit of luck that I got any at all. And as it will stop when I marry you—"

"I shall be raised to forty dollars a week on the fifteenth of September," he made dazed reply. "It seemed to me a big salary, even to marry on. But if you'll consent to wait for me, by another year, maybe, if I work hard—"

"By another year," she observed, "I'll be forty-three. We might save money by living with your mother—"

"My mother!"

There was almost horror in the exclamation; and she winced ever so little. Lloyd looked at her helplessly. The north light was bringing out the fallow tints in all their stark sharpness. It was revealing, too, a skin texture coarsened and roughened by years of cosmetics. Nor was there now in the scant-lashed eyes below the scunter brows any of the gay witchery that had once enthralled him. Mrs. Garth read his heart even as he was reading her face.

"You are cured," she accused brusquely; "you want to stop here and now. I can't say I blame you. You fell in love with a wonder woman. You thought she was like all the bewitching, elusive heroines in the novels that are written for schoolgirls and for boys of your age. You learn now that she is a forty-two-

year-old divorcee with a yellow face and false hair and a spending capacity four times in excess of your salary. Also that her name is Samantha. No one can blame you for refusing to—"

"Samantha," he interposed gravely, "I have the honor to beg you to be my wife. If you will marry me, you will make me very happy. And I will work day and night until I can earn enough to make up to you for the loss of your—your income. If you can learn to love me enough to—"

She came very close to him, and, reaching up, took his face between her two hands, looking deep into his troubled, brave eyes.

"I think," she said very slowly—"I think God—or Fate—or whoever or whatever deigns to look after women like me—sent you to me to prove that there are *men* left on this rotten earth. You are just a boy. But you are more of a man today than anyone I know—or than you'll be ten years hence. You don't understand that now. But some day you will. Your mother will never know how gloriously proud she ought to be of you. Neither will your wife, when you get one. Because they aren't the kind of women who know things. And you may thank God, in their name, that they aren't. *They'll* never realize how much they have to thank Him for. I wish I had had a son like you. But then I shouldn't have 'realized' either."

"I asked you," persisted Lloyd, all uncomprehending, "to make me happy by marrying me—Samantha."

"And I would sooner send you aboard a pest ship," she returned. "Listen, dear: You fell in love with me. At first it amused me. For you were so clean, so amusing, so sweet and so babylike in your million affectations of grown-manhood. Then—"

"I am twenty-three. I—"

"Then," she pursued, unheeding, "I began to see how lovable, how good you were. And I wasn't amused any longer. You were too much like the little son I told you about just now—the one I never had. I saw you were a boy who thinks every woman is—is like that girl

who is making herself miserable about you now. And I—"

"She isn't," he denied stoutly. "She doesn't care a snap. I thought she did once, but—"

She waved aside his protest and took up again the thread of her story.

"I knew you would be fair game for the first woman who might care for the sport of boy-breaking," she continued. "And you were too good for it. There are more women like that than you think. You were certain to run across one of them, soon or late. More likely, soon. It would turn you sour if it didn't do worse. As it is now, you'll probably learn 'The Vampire' and recite it to yourself with your arms folded; and be very, very happy in your bitter disillusion."

"You have no right to—"

"I decided to waste a month or so in making you immune. I've done it. You'll never have your fingers burned by my type of woman again. And that's worth the trouble of learning 'The Vampire.'"

"I love you," he said mechanically, his under jaw very stiff.

"And I love you," she returned—"as dearly as if you were my own little boy."

"Don't!"

"It stings. But it's good for the sore. Now run along. The course is over."

You've graduated. Maybe not with honors, but with more honor than I thought there was."

"You are treating me abominably!" he forced himself to protest.

"Abominably? Yes, you'll think so till—till you grow up. Then you'll know better—much better. But that won't come till you're too busy to read books and begin to read people. And now go, won't you, please? It's getting late, and I don't want anyone else to catch me without my warpaint on. You see, I'm not philanthropist enough to give lessons to the world at large. Good-bye, you white boy."

"Samantha!" he cried, with a twinge of self-loathing at his feeling of relief in the hopelessness of his appeal.

"If you call me that hideous name again," she burst out, "I'll scream."

"But—"

"Oh, it was part of the cure. I picked out the worst I could think of. By the way, be sane in just one thing, if you want any peace of mind. Never tell the Girl. There is no need, you know. These good women have a horrible way of remembering, and of weaving their memories into the web of marital talk. No one's ever sorry for the things he didn't tell. You'll understand that, too, when you grow up. Only, then, it's generally too late. Good-bye."



KANSAS AND LONDON

By Harry Kemp

WHERE the vast and cloudless sky was broken by one crow
I sat upon a hill—all alone—long ago. . . .
But I never felt so lonely and so out of God's way
As here, where I brush elbows with a thousand every day.



AN excuse is the only thing that's easy to find when you're looking for it.

THE CALL OF THE BLOOD

By May T. Mangam

THE Abbaye, in Montmartre, was packed that night. It was the spring of the year. The Americans had begun their annual flight to Paris. So when we arrived and seated ourselves at the table that had been reserved for us, we found there was the usual crowd of mixed nationalities, all eager for excitement and hoping for the unexpected. The music, with its syncopated time, was getting into everybody's blood. But there was only one type of men and women dancing, for there was still at that time class distinction in the dancing world. The professional dancers and the *demi-monde*, with lithesome swing and rhythm, danced around the tables, in and out. The air was hot, and the dazzling light, the laughter and chatter of many voices created that recklessness that only Paris can create.

Our attention was attracted to a couple who had seated themselves at the adjoining table. No one could doubt for a moment His nationality. English was written all over him—the most conservative type of Englishman. He was well groomed, wore a monocle, and with his reserved air and refined appearance he looked to be a man under thirty years of age who had lived wisely. With him was the loveliest creature I have ever seen. She was truly a study in violet. Her demure violet blue eyes shaded by long black lashes, her coal black hair and white skin, with the haughtily curved scarlet lips and gleaming white teeth held our attention until we forced ourselves to look at her as the woman. Her beautiful figure, from the tip of her high-arched slipper to the crown of her plume-covered hat, was clothed in violet. Her only jewels were amethysts, wonderfully cut so that they reflected the light around her.

It was with an air of boredom that she settled back on the cushions and with a supercilious manner took in the surrounding scene. Bored and disdainful she sat, until slowly the music and the dancing began to creep into her blood. Like a panther at bay, ready to spring, she watched. She forgot her companion; she entirely forgot her role in life.

Suddenly she could contain herself no longer. With a snap of her fingers and a toss of the head, she beckoned the professional dancer to her, and in a low voice gave him a command for the musicians. Then, gathering her gown up, she stepped into the middle of the floor. She was a transformed woman as she began her dance. It was a veritable call of the blood. No one could have stopped her; her blood was on fire; even the amethysts she wore seemed to blaze with the fire that emanated from her, and she counted as naught all her wealth and refinement. She went back to where she had started from. It was her life of the past with its excitement, the madness in her veins that had called her.

The Englishman's face was a study. After the first deep red flush that had transfused it, he sat perfectly calm, toying with his fork, but not watching her. Then as the music stopped she came to, and I think for the first time realized what she had done. For suddenly she assumed her artificial air of the *grande dame*. Not a word was spoken between herself and the Englishman as she seated herself at the table beside him. He coolly lighted a cigarette and tossed her partner a louis. Then they resumed their supper.

HE WENT FOR A SOLDIER

By Ruth Comfort Mitchell

HE marched away with a blithe young score of him
With the first volunteers,
Clear-eyed and clean and sound to the core of him,
Blushing under the cheers.
They were fine, new flags that swung a-flying there,
Oh, the pretty girls he glimpsed a-crying there,
Pelting him with pinks and with roses—
Billy, the Soldier Boy!

Not very clear in the kind young heart of him
What the fuss was about,
But the flowers and the flags seemed part of him—
The music drowned his doubt.
It's a fine, brave sight they were a-coming there
To the gay, bold tune they kept a-drumming there,
While the boasting fifes shrilled jauntily—
Billy, the Soldier Boy!

Soon he is one with the blinding smoke of it—
Volley and curse and groan:
Then he has done with the knightly joke of it—
It's rending flesh and bone.
There are pain-crazed animals a-shrieking there
And a warm blood stench that is a-reeking there;
He fights like a rat in a corner—
Billy, the Soldier Boy!

There he lies now, like a ghoulis score of him,
Left on the field for dead:
The ground all round is smeared with the gore of him—
Even the leaves are red.
The Thing that was Billy lies a-dying there,
Writhing and a-twisting and a-crying there;
A sickening sun grins down on him—
Billy, the Soldier Boy!

Still not quite clear in the poor, wrung heart of him
What the fuss was about,
See where he lies—or a ghastly part of him—
While life is oozing out:
There are loathsome things he sees a-crawling there;
There are hoarse-voiced crows he hears a-calling there,
Eager for the foul feast spread for them—
Billy, the Soldier Boy!

THE SMART SET

*How much longer, O Lord, shall we bear it all?
 How many more red years?
 Story it and glory it and share it all,
 In seas of blood and tears?
 They are braggart attitudes we've worn so long;
 They are tinsel platitudes we've sworn so long—
 We who have turned the Devil's Grindstone,
 Borne with the hell called War!*



FROM THE JOURNAL OF MME. LÉANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

WE are all Bluebeard's wives. Woe to us if we penetrate the secret chamber of our lovers' past. It means death—to our love.

The only refuge from love's tragedy lies in its banality.

Luck is necessity to the fool—and difficulty to the great.

What makes life interesting lies not in its occurrences but in the way we look at them.

In the beautiful Eden of every woman's heart lives a small serpent of perversity. Some cage it securely in rigid conventions—some hide it in a riot of smiling flowers—and some strangle it for love. But it is never forgotten—and often revenged.

If you are true to yourself you can but rarely be true to others.

A woman hates most those whom she has wronged—and loves most dearly him to whom she has everything to forgive.



"YOU never laugh, Myrtle; you seem to have no sense of humor."
 "My dear, it's not my humor—it's my teeth."



FINANCIER—A man who photographs a dollar, uses the photograph in business, and then saves the dollar to use again.

EXPERT IN HIGH FINANCE—One who photographs a dollar twice and uses both photos as collateral.

PROMOTER—One who photographs the photo and then takes the shadow of it to utilize as stock in trade.

ROSES AND ORCHIDS

By Thomas Grant Springer

L ORD, it was hot! One of those days when the deck awning seemed to gather all the sun's rays and then drop them down upon you in a shower of red hot arrows as you sprawled in sticky duck on the steamer chairs. If you took a drink, it seemed to start right through your pores as it went down, and came out in steam, and you didn't dare smoke for fear you would break into flame. There didn't seem to be any coolness in the green fringe of the shore line where the coconut palms stood up out of the sand like feather dusters stuck on end, and the mosaic pattern of the town with its blue and cream and cerise houses seemed to wriggle before your eyes in the serpentine quiver of the air. As the lighters plied to and fro from the shore, it made you sweat seeing the backs of the natives with the muscles writhing like oily snakes as they plied their broad-bladed paddles.

"How do you stand it, Doctor?" I asked of my visitor, who seemed cool and crisp in his starched duck at my side.

"Oh, you get used to it—at least, some of us do; and then you like it."

I snorted derisively, and then, looking over the brazen waters toward the dock, I saw a canoe putting out for the ship, cutting through the glassy swell, leaving a narrow trail of ripples in its wake. The brightly clad native woman in the stern swayed from side to side as she swung her paddle, now to port, now to starboard.

"Hello! Here comes Vic! Haven't seen her all day," said the Doctor, sitting up.

"Who's she?" I asked lazily.

"Only a bumboat woman, but she's a jolly sort. Come on over to the rail; she's got a monkey for a mate and a couple of parrots for mascots."

A languid curiosity dragged me to the rail, and sure enough, as the laughing girl drew nearer, I saw the parrots fluttering and chattering on the gunwale and the excited monkey in the bow waving his long arms and tail. As she drew alongside he reached out, and grasping a dangling rope, held the boat against the tide while she traded with the passengers. Suddenly she looked up to us, laughing, one hand full of orchids, in the other a bunch of roses, pale, languid roses, but real roses nevertheless.

I tossed a coin into the boat, she threw me the line of her basket and the next moment I had buried my face in the roses. Then I turned to the Doctor. "No perfume," I said in surprise.

He smiled. "This is the land of 'flowers without perfume'—you know the rest of it."

I looked them over, seeing how pale they were, contrasted with the glory of the orchids, and replied: "Poor little exiles! They remind me of Northern women who might come down here and fade just as they did in this damnable climate."

"That was who brought them here first, a Northern woman, and she followed out your simile," said the Doctor as we went back to our chairs.

"How was that?" I asked, scenting a story and leading him out. The Doctor accepted a cigar and then, lying back in his chair, gave me the tale.

"She was the wife of an engineer who

came down here to build the government railroad. He was a fine sort of chap named Haynes. She was the only real white woman in Corinto and a curiosity to the natives. She was tall, slender and willowy, with a mass of bright gold hair, blue eyes, bright blue, but beautiful at that, and a complexion of that creamy whiteness that even the tropic sun can't make an impression on. At first she was delighted with the place, and when she saw the bungalow—that's it over there, the cream-colored one on the edge of the cocoanut grove—she had to have flowers, real home flowers, and the next trip up she sent to San Francisco for rose bushes.

"Anything will grow down here. I believe if you stuck your walking stick into the ground and left it over the rainy season it would beat Aaron's rod in a leaf contest; and after the first rainy season that's what they did, leafed right out, then seemed to discover when the hot weather hit them that they were in the wrong place. They didn't die—just faded, bloomed palely, losing all their color and fragrance.

"Well she was just like her roses; as soon as the first hot weather settled in she seemed to fade. All day long she would sit listlessly under the tiled roof of the veranda and droop just as they did. Like them, she didn't die; that is, she wasn't really ill, you know, but the heat took all the energy out of her. She lost weight and became a wraith hung with loose clothes that had fitted her when we first saw them. In the beginning her husband was worried half to death and had me over every other day, but I told him she wasn't really ill; and I couldn't do anything for her but give her a tonic, which I knew would do no good but relieve his uneasiness. There wasn't a thing the matter with her but the climate. Lots of people are like that down here.

"It went along that way the whole season, and he rather got used to it, and with my assurance looked for her to pick up when the rains came. I did, too, but she had soaked enough heat into her system to last all through the spell we call cool down here, and that isn't anything

to brag of, and by the time the next dry turn came he was accustomed to her being that way. The climate didn't affect him at all; in fact, he put on flesh, tanned up, and with the outdoor life and the interest in the work, he was twice the man he was when he came down.

"Of course, being full of the joy of life, it wasn't natural for him to be entirely without social relaxation, for man is a sociable, even an affectionate animal, and Haynes was all man. He tried to get her to go back to the States, for he was salting down his pay and didn't want to quit until he had enough to make it worth while, but in spite of all her listlessness she loved him more than the climate would let her show, and she was bound to stick to him. As the second season dragged along, I could see it was telling on him, for he didn't have a real wife, only a quietly animated ghost of what she once was, and the climate was having just the opposite effect on him, making him keen for all its enjoyments, and there is a certain ardency gets into the blood down here and makes red corpuscles in plenty for those it takes to itself, and Haynes was one of them.

"It was quite a while before he even noticed old Soto's daughter, Panchita, but he did finally and she was not slow to know it. She was one of those pomegranate-skinned, midnight-crowned women with eyes under whose softness slumbered fires of passion it was dangerous to awaken, and the blood that reddened her full lips was as warm as the sun of the South could make it. She was all that Haynes' wife was not—the gorgeous tropic orchid against which the pale transplanted rose faded into insignificance.

"Panchita was a nice girl, too, and couldn't see any harm in Haynes chatting with her, and I doubt if she really noticed how often he got to drooping in on her till it became a habit. He was a bright, clever fellow and she was merry and sunny-tempered, and they just came together as naturally as magnet and steel. It was as innocent as the law of choice and as dangerous. In the soft coolness of the amorous nights the ripple

of her deep-throated laugh was far more to be desired than the silence of the pale woman who rocked on the flagged porch of the bungalow, and so the tropics spread their insidious snare for their feet as they strolled together when the velvet shadows wiped out the burning heat of the days.

"Finally I got to noticing it, but it does more harm than good to say anything about such matters to the parties concerned. I only hoped Mrs. Haynes was too listless to find out, but soon I knew she had, for I got to calling on her now and then in the evening, and the look in her eyes told me that her pride was trying to rouse her against a physical weakness that she could not overcome. As her husband was away most of the time and the place was so small, she couldn't help finding out how he filled up his evenings, but if a woman hasn't the strength to fight under such conditions and has too much pride to voice her wrongs to the author of them she is bound to lose.

"Sometime after I became acquainted with the state of affairs a new factor was added to them in the person of Señor Francisco Alvarez, who had a big coffee plantation just outside of Corinto. Naturally, he met Mrs. Haynes, and the very thing that was making her husband slip from her attracted him. He was a tall, slender Spaniard about the color of the berries that made his fortune, with just enough of the native in him to make him attractive. He was educated abroad and had the European polish added to the native grace of the country, and when he found this lone white and gold woman sitting night after night on the veranda, he took to dropping over there. It was easy to see his side of it, but of course she didn't. She merely accepted him as a diversion from her own thoughts, and he, quite naturally, knowing what we all knew, mistook her.

"Of course, the native part of the town—and that's about all there is outside of two or three white men—didn't pay any attention, and we never said a word among ourselves, though we all kept up a thinking. We were sorry, sorry for both sides. Haynes, with his

eyes full of Panchita, took no especial notice of the Señor. Of course he knew he was there, and I think he was rather relieved that his wife had someone to fill up her evenings, as it left him a little more freedom.

"But there isn't any such thing as platonic in the tropics. A taste for orchids always develops into a mania down here. Once those precious flowers take hold of a man's imagination he becomes obsessed with an uncontrollable passion for them. I've seen fellows from the North come down here and put in every spare moment hunting in the swamps and taking all kinds of chances to get them. There is something uncanny about them, like the embodiment of the tropics themselves, and Panchita was an orchid. The tropics had gotten into Haynes' blood. It wasn't his fault; it wasn't Panchita's.

"But the law of contrasts was working both ways. I could see the opposite in Señor Alvarez, though Haynes, blinded by his infatuation, and his wife, to whom the tropics gave no sign, did not. Day by day I saw the suppressed fire in his eyes giving unheeded warnings in unguarded flashes just as old Santa Maria over there rumbles and trembles a bit as the inner heat banks up under her crest before an eruption. As an outsider and friend of all, I read the signs more clearly than they could, just as we white men always heed old Santa Maria's warnings while the natives never take precautions until the cone blows off, and then they pray wildly and ineffectively to their saints.

"One night I was strolling out by Soto's place in the moonlight when I saw a white blur in the filigree shadows of the calabash tree, which I took to be one figure until my step sounded on the hard coral road when it unwound itself, and as the moonlight flowed between, I knew it was Haynes and Panchita. They greeted me with strained embarrassment, but I returned it as though the shadows had protected them and went on. 'Touch hands and part with laughter,' maybe; 'touch lips and part with tears,' or not at all down here. If Panchita had given him her lips, her

heart and soul were on them and it was not in the nature of a man, a man whom the tropics had made their own, to resist her. I wondered what I should do before it was too late, but I knew I had small chance of stopping the inevitable.

"But I hadn't taken full account of the other side of the complication, as I noticed the next evening when I strolled over to the bungalow and found the Señor there. There was something in the somber glitter of his eyes and the nervous suppression of his manner that made me sit him out, and Haynes came home before we both took our leave. The moon madness had been at work in the Señor, though Mrs. Haynes had not noticed it. He had sat with his back to the light, his eyes devouring her as the silver flood made her frail blonde beauty something almost unearthly, even to me. Poor Alvarez! I pitied him and cursed Haynes, then I thought of Panchita and reversed it, for I was only an old watchdog trying to stop trouble at both ends.

"As you might guess, the trouble broke out in the least expected quarter. The dark of the moon passed safely, but the new one brewed its poison to the full. One night Haynes came home early through the jungle path into the rear of the house. His light canvas shoes made no noise, and thinking his wife in bed, he was even more cautious; then he heard voices on the veranda. Before he got there the volcano erupted and he stepped out the door to find his wife struggling in the Señor's arms. His temper didn't stop to note details, and the next instant the embrace was three-handed, and when her scream brought me—my place is just across the road, and it was a mercy I was up—I had my hands full to pry Haynes and the Señor apart.

"We turned back to find a white heap lying on the veranda. We got her into the house, and I thought the tropics had finished her at last. I turned to Haynes, his face under its tan only less ghastly than hers.

"My God! he cried. 'And he wasn't even a white man!'

"You blamed fool,' I said, 'he's as white as Panchita!'

"We glared at each other across the bed, where that still, wasted form lay, then I gave him his medicine in an allopathic dose.

"This is your work,' I said. 'And as for Alvarez, I'm only sorry for him.'

"A frightened look came into his face. 'What do you mean?' he whispered hoarsely.

"That she knew no more about what was going to happen than you cared. There is only one regret I have, and that is that she didn't yield as gracefully as Panchita did to you!

"His eyes widened, his face went gray, then his knees gave way and he sank down with his arms upon the bed, sobbing in dry gasps.

"I looked at the still, unconscious figure, got him to his feet and went at my task. It was a long one, but it gave me time to attend to him, too, and both certainly needed treatment.

"In the long, anxious days that followed I reviewed the matter from both sides, and by the time her eyes were clear with the light of reason it was a wildly anxious husband they met. I hardly had her on her feet again before he was for catching the next steamer for the States, for his resignation was in and the call of home was strong.

"Yes, they're up there now in the West. He's doing well and she—why, the last time I was in San Francisco I thought I had never seen such a radiantly beautiful creature. You know blondes are not meant for this climate; her roses proved that. They still bloom at the bungalow, though. I own it now, and I let Vic cut them to sell to the passengers just to show them."

I looked from them to the orchids in my hand.

"But what of these?" I asked.

The Doctor smiled. "They're natives of the country, and Nature usually has her own remedies. I attended one of Alvarez's children last week, and Panchita was up the last rainy season. She has a husband in Colombia, if that's what you mean."

And the Doctor stopped the deck boy and told him to bring the bottle and a siphon and he would mix it himself.

STILL ANOTHER ESSAY ON ACTING

By George Jean Nathan

A SUBSCRIPTION for one year—any year—for the average monthly magazine regularly assures the subscriber of at least five "Essays on Acting," by that eminent and experienced actor, Mr. Brander Matthews, three articles on "The Art of Mrs. Fiske," by my otherwise well behaved colleague, Walter Prichard Eaton, two on "The Exotic Art of Madame Nazimova," by Ada Patterson and a couple of the annual articles on George Arliss—to say nothing of four or five similar theses upon more or less celebrated histrionisms (photos by White). I doubt not that all these articles are found to be exceedingly informative by many persons, but, as for myself, I am forced to admit that all I have ever been able to derive from them in any concrete sense has been the knowledge that George Henry Lewes once said: "Naturalness in acting means truthful presentation of the character indicated by the author" (which I seem to have known already), that "mere prettiness often passes for acting in these days," that Mrs. Fiske loves dumb animals, that Nazimova is "reptilian" and that she was discovered on the Bowery, and that George Arliss' favorite role is the one he happens to be playing at the time the article appears. In view of the insufficiency of these articles (so far as I am concerned), and in view of the fact that they fail to convey (to me) any definite news of the thing called acting or any sufficiently vivid sense of the peculiarities of the several mummers' individual art, I have deemed it expedient that I write for my own benefit the following essay. I am indebted for the scene quoted in my essay to Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' "Mrs. Dane's Defense" (Act III), the characters being Mrs. Dane and Sir Daniel Carteret. My essay:

FIRST CAST

SIR DANIEL..... John Mason
MRS. DANE..... Mrs. Fiske

MRS. DANE (*with a sore throat*)—I'm not abadwoman. You don't know. You wouldn't condemnmeifyouknewall.

SIR DANIEL (*gazing intently at the fingernails of his right hand*)—Tell me.

MRS. DANE—I'dbeenbroughtup in a village. Iwasachild in knowledge. I knew nothingoflife, nothing oftheworld. Mr. Trent wasverykind to me. He wasrichanddistinguished and flatteredmebyhis notice. And I—oh, why didn't somebodywarnme? Whydidtheykeepme ignorant? I tell you I knewnothing! Nothing! Tillitwas too late! You believeme, don't you?

SIR DANIEL (*gazing intently at the fingernails of his left hand*)—Tell me all.

MRS. DANE—Ihatedmyself. Ishouldhavehated him, but he wasvery kind. Itwenton till allwas discovered. . . . My cousin Lucy wasliving in Montreal. Shewasanangel—shetook me intoherhome and gaveoutthat I wasa widow. My child was bornthere.

THE SMART SET

SECOND CAST

SIR DANIEL.....George Arliss
 MRS. DANE.....Mrs. Leslie Carter

MRS. DANE (*inhaling numerous "h's" in quick succession*)—I'm—not—a—baaad—woman! You—don't—know—you—don't—know—you—don't—know! You—wouldn't—condemn—me—you—wouldn't—condemn—me—if—you—if—you—knew—all!

SIR DANIEL (*arching his eyebrows; with a staccato gesture*)—Tell me.

MRS. DANE (*fists to cheeks*)—I'd bean brought up in a—village. I was a mere child—I—knew—nothing—nothing—of life—nothing—of the world, the cru-elle, cru-elle world—nothing! Mr. Trent was kind to me—very. He was so rich, so distingué—he flattered me, child that I was. And I—oh, why didn't somebody warn me? Why did they—keep—me—ignorant? I tell you I knew—nothing. Nothing! Till it was too late, too late. You—believe—me—don't—you?

SIR DANIEL (*taking six rapid steps toward her, then turning abruptly and taking six rapid steps away from her*)—Tell me—all.

MRS. DANE (*on the floor*)—I hated myself, Sir Daniel, I hated myself and, Sir Daniel, I—should—have—hated—him—yes, Sir Daniel—I—should—have—hated—him—but he was very, very, very kind, very kind. It—went—on—till—all, till—all—all—all was discovered. . . . My cousin Lucy—she was—an angel—an angel—she took me—in—to—her—home—Sir Daniel—in—to—her—home—and gave out that I—that I—was a widow. (*A long pause*) My child—my child, Sir Daniel—was—born—there.

THIRD CAST

SIR DANIEL.....Arnold Daly
 MRS. DANE.....Hedwig Reicher

MRS. DANE (*making a face*)—I'm nut a bad wooman—you dun't know—you wude nut cawndemn me eef you knew all.

SIR DANIEL (*up stage; casting a condescending look of unutterable scorn, pity and contempt at the people who paid to get in; casually*)—Well, tell me.

MRS. DANE (*holding onto a table*)—I had bean brawght oop in a veallage and I wass a child in knullich and I kynou nawthing off life, nawthing off the wawrld. Mister Trent wass very kind to me and he wass rich and distingwished and flattered me by his notice. And I—oh, why did nut sohmbody wahn me? Why, oh, why, did they keep me ignorunt? I tell you I knyow nawthing—nawthing—till it wass too late. Oh Gawd, you believe me, dun't you?

SIR DANIEL (*with his eyes on a handsome lady in one of the upper boxes; picking up a newspaper—in a bored tone*)—Go on.

MRS. DANE (*holding out both hands*)—I hated myself and I shoo'd have hated him also, but he wass very kind and it went on unteel all wass discovered. . . . My cohsin Lyoucy wass living in Muntreal and she wass an angel—she took me into her home and gave out that I wass a widow. My child (*looking fixedly at the carpet*) wass born there!

FOURTH CAST

SIR DANIEL.....Cyril Scott
 MRS. DANE.....Madame Nazimova

MRS. DANE (*twining herself about SIR DANIEL, with her lips one-quarter of an inch from his*)—I'mnotabadwomanyoudon'tknowyouwouldn'tcondemnmeifyou-knewall.

SIR DANIEL (*feeling his collar*)—Well now, I say, tell me.

MRS. DANE (*twining herself about SIR DANIEL, with her lips one-eighth of an inch from his*)—I'd been brought up in a village I was a child I knewed I knewed nothing of life nothing of the world mister Trent was very kind to me he was rich and distinguished and flattered me by his notice and I oh why didn't somebody warn me why did they keep me ignorant! Tell you I knewed nothing nothing till it was too late you believe me don't you?

SIR DANIEL (*feeling his collar and straightening his cravat*)—I say, Mrs. Dane, tell me all.

MRS. DANE (*twining herself about SIR DANIEL, with her lips one-sixteenth of an inch from his*)—I hated myself I should have hated him but he was very kind it went on till all was discovered my cousin Lucy was living in Montreal she was an angel she took me into her home and gave out that I was a widow my child was born there.

(SIR DANIEL *sees himself from MRS. DANE'S embrace, goes hurriedly to table L., and drinks three quarts of ice water without stopping.*)

FIFTH CAST

SIR DANIEL.....John Barrymore
MISS DANE.....Billie Burke

MISS DANE (*in a riding habit by Redfern; at the top of the stairs*)—I'm not really a wicked girl, Dan. You see, you don't understand me. (*Tossing her curls; with a pout*) And I'm very sure, Dan, you really wouldn't treat me in this nasty, disagreeable, mean old way if you really knew! (*Applause*)

SIR DANIEL (*at the bottom of the stairs*)—Let's see—oh—uh—oh, yes (*Recollecting*) "Tell me."

MISS DANE (*who in the meantime has changed to a lavender charmeuse by Paquin*) (*Applause*)—Well, Danny, it was this way. I'd been brot up in a dinky little burg by two maiden aunts who didn't understand me in the teeniest, weeniest least. I was an awful kiddie—really I was, Danny—even younger than I am now—and life, the world, all was a wonderful mystery to me. (*Applause*) Reggie—Mr. Trent—was awfully sweet to me, really he was. He had oodles of money and the cunningest mustache, and of course he was flattered by my notice. And I—well, why didn't somebody warn him? Why did they keep him ignorant—poor boy—poor susceptible old Reggie—I tell you, Danny, he knew nothing. Till it was too late! You do believe me, don't you, dear? (*Applause*)

SIR DANIEL (*hands in pockets*)—Let's see—oh—uh—oh, yes (*Recollecting*) "Tell me all."

MISS DANE (*who has quickly changed to baby blue pajamas with pink ribbons by Callot; archly*)—I did hate myself for it, really, Danny, really I did. I shouldn't have taken advantage of him. And I suppose he should have hated me, too, poor Reggie, but he was awfully nice about it, really he was, and I just love him for it. (*Loud applause*) Well, things went on until one day—I remember it so distinctly, Dan, really I do—the mean old gossips started their mean old talk and mamma heard about it. Oh, there was the very devil to pay, I can tell you! Mamma was frightfully upset—packed me off to my room without supper, the mean old thing—and wouldn't let me have even my box of candy. (*The audience is in tears.*) . . . Well, old dear, my cousin Lucy was living in Deauville—you remember Lucy—she's the cross-eyed one (*Laughter*)—but she's just a love anyway—she let me visit her and gave out that I was an heiress. The automobile was delivered there. (*The loud applause is drowned by ravished exclamations on MISS DANE'S cuteness.*)



TACT is the poetry of social conduct.

DARK

By Laura Benét

THE dark came as a comforter,
For I was tired of day.
I slipped my working robe and sped
Into her arms to play.

She bathed me in the springs that ran
From a cool crystal sea,
And with a waving peacock fan
She soothed the heart of me.

She told me tales of pine groves deep,
Of cold snow nights of moon.
She rocked me to the drowsy hum
Of bees a-swarm in June.

My thoughts they wandered agile, far,
Like children on a beach.
The gleams, the cares, the frets of day
Dropped far beyond my reach.

Far off my airy spirit sped,
While in the street below
People intent on nothingness
Ran chattering to and fro!



TWO can live as cheaply as one who has to pay alimony.



EVERYBODY likes the liberty of making his own mistakes.



IF "children are attracted by goodness and men by beauty," what are women attracted by?

A BURST OF SPEED

By Charles Neville Buck

I WILL tell you a professional secret. The *sine qua non* in any story is to gain the sympathy of the reader for hero and heroine. At the proper cue my heroine will appear upon the stage. You will gasp. Then you will tumultuously applaud. She is that sort of heroine. She is a heavier-than-air angel—but not much heavier. Her coming will be as the breath of breezes off a lotus land, wafting before them the petals of orchids and the fragrance of violets. I'm not at all worried about my heroine. Her name is Guinevere. But I acknowledge that with my hero the matter is more questionable.

In his behalf, my advocacy must be convincing. Otherwise you might think his name too appropriate. His name is Dub—Dub Van Zoandsoster.

Some young men stultify the possible benefit of a college education by excessive study, thereby permanently straining their intellects. Dub did not. He held that brains, like the bold peasantry—a country's pride—when once used up, cannot be resupplied. To his own allotment he applied the strictest policy of conservation.

He had been christened with some name which is unimportant. On the Cambridge gridiron it had been amended to "Double Shovel." Tribute having thus been rendered to his prowlike prowess, it was economically reamended to "Dub."

I suppose you will insist upon some personal description of Dub. So be it. Open any magazine at the front or back, avoiding only the reading matter. Literature is tainted with realism, but idealism survives in the ads. For a portrait which will do my hero justice

I must turn to them. That Jove-like youth, with unimpeachable shoulders (afforded only by the exclusive tailoring of Cuttem & Stitchem), might have been posed by Dub. That composite portrait of Hercules and Adonis, wearing a Nevershrink shirt, might have been photographed from Dub. That serene visage surmounting a Don'tchoke collar—but enough. Such is Dub.

As this story opens, Dub is restively pacing the library of a house on the north side of Washington Square. He is waiting for someone. He is waiting for Guinevere! There is a light footfall on the stair. She is coming. Reader, make ready your applause. Guinevere is on her way! She is here! She stands for a moment at the door! Look! Look! I told you you would be enthusiastic! In her cheeks blossom young orchards of burgeoning peach boughs! In her hair is spun the pulse-maddening gold of Eldorado! What trellised rose gardens have been ravished and despoiled of their glory for the curving petals of her lips! What pearl fisheries have been denuded of treasure, by the divers of the high gods, for the jeweled beauty which flashes in her smile! I besought the Editor to remove the embargo of space restrictions and allow me a free hand for describing Guinevere—at ten cents a word. But you can't argue with an editor.

Dub has taken one eager step forward. He stands at gaze. Guinevere's drooping lids speak eloquently of welcome. Guinevere proffers one hand. Eagerly he seizes it, and reaches enterprisingly for the other. Dub relinquishes her hands, because he needs his arms. Rhetoricians say that paren-

theses should be sparingly employed. When used, they surround and encircle something more or less cut off from the rest of the text. Dub desires to cut Guinevere off from the rest of the text. The use which he makes of his arms is parenthetical.

There is a much louder footfall on the stairs. Neither of them hears it. So exclusive in effect is the parenthetical. An elderly and portly gentleman stands just outside the door contemplating the tableau. On the visage of the elderly and portly gentleman sits a certain austerity. To his posture appertains a certain ominous rigidity. From his lips drops a succinct epigram:

"Well, I'll be damned!"

This is an unmistakable cue for Dub to let his arms fall supine at his sides, step backward and raise a face upon which is writ unpreparedness and embarrassment. Dub does so. The red, red roses of Guinevere's lips spread contagiously until they overrun and subjugate the creamy peach blossoms of her cheeks.

"Well, I'll be damned!" reannounces the elderly gentleman. He speaks with mounting emphasis. One feels that the impending damnation of the elderly gentleman will be attended by unpleasantness for others. His trembling fingers work at the eighteen-inch collar which has grown suddenly tight against his swelling jugular.

Dub looks from Guinevere to the elderly gentleman. Certain sounds emanating from his throat indicate that he is attempting to speak. The attempt is unsuccessful. Guinevere does better. Her contribution, though brief, is emotional. It is this: "Oh, papa!"

Papa wheels. With the commanding gesture of a stout Roman emperor, he lifts a trembling finger toward the stairs. Guinevere understands. From the landing she flashes back upon Dub a sur-reptitious glance. It is a glance intended to fortify and recompense him for what is coming. Dub does not doubt that it is coming. It comes.

"So!" brightly comments the elderly gentleman. "So!"

It occurs to Dub that his attitude

has hitherto fallen a trifle short of the debonair. Lochinvar would doubtless have carried the situation with a more graceful insouciance. He produces a cigarette case. He tenders it to the elderly gentleman.

"Will you smoke, sir?" he courteously inquires.

"—!" says the elderly gentleman. He does not say it distinctly, because he is choking, but Dub construes the portent to be negative.

"Since we happen to meet, dear uncle," suggests Dub, "I don't mind admitting that I need money."

So the secret is out. Dub is, after all, a member of the family. However, do not permit that circumstance to delude you. It is not by the aid or consent of the elderly gentleman that this condition is true. It is a fact which the elderly gentleman deplures.

"Since we happen to meet!" explodes the e. g. "Happen to—Gr-r-r-r!" Language gives way to primordial incoherence.

In justice to Dub it should be asserted that he does *not* regard this a propitious moment for a touch. Quite the contrary. He broaches so ill-timed a topic only because he is actuated by a strategic and ulterior motive. The motive might be summed up in the words, "any subject but Guinevere." There are moments in the bull ring when the bull becomes so irritable as to abandon all promiscuous hostility. He prefers to pursue, overtake, gore and toss one particular combatant. He declines to be diverted. He focuses his animosity. He dedicates himself to a single purpose. Dub has the conviction that such a moment is at hand. His elderly relative is the bull. For object of attack Dub's name has been presented, and the nominations have been closed.

"My daughter and my ducats!" declaims the senior Van Zoandsoster. "Is that all you want? Isn't there anything else you'll have?"

Dub is disconcerted. He has, at tongue's end, no Shakespearean reply.

"I must have money," he limply avers.

"Why so?" interrogates the other.

Dub's nonchalance is wilting. He feels that one, stating an axiom, should not be saddled with the burden of proof.

"Why—er—why—er—I must live, you know."

The elderly gentleman lifts his brows in polite interrogation.

"Ah, indeed!" he courteously questions. "Why so?"

Dub is shocked. He is silent.

"In six years," the elderly gentleman informs him, "you will receive, in entailed form, a competency. Meanwhile it is entirely optional with you whether you work or starve. Suit yourself."

The oft-warned heir of the Van Zoandsosters realizes that the bitter hour of reckoning has arrived. With finality comes an exalted resolve. If he is to starve he will at least waste away with dignity, scorning to cringe before the hand of withdrawn bounty.

"I shall say no more." He speaks with a stoical nobility of mien. "I refuse to beg."

A silence ensues, broken at last by Dub.

"Would you wish to see your orphaned nephew engaged in menial labor?"

"I should much prefer not to see my orphaned nephew at all." The elderly gentleman's manner has quite regained its composure. His reply is prompt and cheerful. "Vagrancy has never appealed to me—even in *editions-de-luxe*. However, there is dignity in labor. There is nobility in toil." The voice mounts eloquently in peroration.

"You are a parasite, young sir, and to be quite frank with you, I have grown weary of being your parasitee."

The interview seems to be completed. From above stairs comes a sound such as might have been heard in Heaven when Lucifer made war and angels wept.

The elderly gentleman touches an electric call button. In the doorway materializes a dignified personage in butler's livery.

"Huggins," instructs the elderly gentleman, "insert an announcement in the papers that I have discontinued financial relations with my nephew."

Dub groans. He is stricken to the core of his being. At a single blow he has been cut off from his commissary.

The elder Mr. Van Zoandsoster smiles. "Whenever I become convinced that the strenuousness of your labor is imperilling the family dignity," he facetiously suggests, "I shall implore you to return. Huggins, show Mr. Van Zoandsoster out."

Young Mr. Van Zoandsoster pre-empted one end of one bench in Washington Square, where he reflects upon the ephemeral quality of voluntarily bestowed annuities.

Someone emerges from the basement entrance of the house of Tainted Millionaire Vanderpruyt. The person who emerges is not merely a person: he is a personage. There clings about his bearing such a dignity as cannot pass unmarked. It can pertain only to a Justice of the Supreme Court—or a millionaire's serving man.

With a stately and unhurried progress the major-domo of the Vanderpruyt establishment—for it is he—arrives abreast of Dub's position. With a calm deference he lifts his hat and halts.

"Good morning, sir." He lends a respectful dignity to the salutation. "It is an uncommonly fine day, sir, is it not?"

"It is not," replies Mr. Van Zoandsoster.

"As you say, sir," amends the Presence. "It is a bit raw for the spring of the year."

"Do you happen to know of a place," abruptly inquires Mr. Van Zoandsoster, "where a gentleman can realize on a fairly well filled wardrobe?"

"There is such places, sir," thoughtfully responds the Presence, "though personally I have never had occasion to investigate them, sir."

"My good man," suggests Dub, "speaking frankly and in the vernacular, my uncle has just tied a can to me. I should value an introduction to someone who has had occasion to make the investigations which you have been so happily spared."

Mr. Van Zoandsoster has spoken impressively. He has anticipated the flattery of startled incredulity. He is disappointed.

"If I may make so bold, sir," ventured the Overlord of Underlings tentatively, "as to offer a suggestion, possibly we may be of mutual advantage to each other, as I might say, sir."

"If," declares Mr. Van Zoandsoster, "you can think of any manner in which I can be of advantage to anyone, I salute you. You have an active mind."

"I am presuming, sir," replies the Presence with composure, "that in the event of my showing you a feasible escape from your temporary embarrassment, you may in the future be disposed to remember me with some trifling emolument, sir."

"The presumption is conservative," concedes Dub.

"Thank you, sir. According to my understanding of your uncle's ideas, sir, this unfortunate—er—attrition between him and you arises, as I might say, from diverging points of view regarding your preference for a life of leisure. Your uncle, sir, fancies that he desires to see you more actively employed."

"So I gathered from his remarks," acknowledges Mr. Van Zoandsoster.

"I have noticed, sir, during a continuous association with persons of position, that gentlemen frequently do not want what they think they want," observes the sage servitor. "Now if your uncle was, as I might say, all fed up with this idea of work, he would shortly become reasonable."

"To get him all fed up, I should have to do the work," objects Mr. Van Zoandsoster with unanswerable logic.

"Only for a short time, sir. Let us assume a purely hypothetical case. Suppose, for example, sir, you was to become a member of the force as a traffic patrolman. I think I might arrange it, sir, through a friend of mine who is in Tammany Hall. You could, in that event, arrest your uncle for driving his car too fast and present him in the night court. The reporters would inform the public how Mr. Dub Van

Zoandsoster had been forced by his uncle's ungenerous attitude to earn his daily bread with a nightstick. I think, sir, your uncle would conclude that you was safer and less troublesome at home, sir." The great brain pauses. "Not as I means to impute, sir," it hastily adds, "that your uncle *does* drive his car too fast."

It is July at Atlantic City. You are growing restive, dear reader, for the return of Guinevere. So am I. We have been denied the sight of her for two months. Let us stroll together by the gleaming beach. Perchance we shall find her. There, there, look quickly! Yonder, wading up out of the sea! Is that Aphrodite rising from the foam? Better—it is Guinevere!

But why that look of sadness in those ravishing young eyes? Why that melancholy on her fair brow?

A bathing-suit-ful of elderly gentleman follows her up from the sounding sea. The elderly gentleman wears, in addition to the bathing suit, a deep scowl as of fixed melancholy. Nor is it merely that he has stepped upon a sharp-cornered crab. It is some more permanent and deep-seated grief. Constant drops will eat through adamant. If the drops be Guinevere's tears, wouldn't they gnaw into your heart and desolate it? They would mine. They have desolated the elderly gentleman. He is ready to capitulate. He looks at Guinevere. Guinevere gazes heart-brokenly out to sea. On her glorious lashes salt water trembles and sparkles. The elderly gentleman observes it. He does not pause to consider that she is just walking up out of several billion gallons of salt water.

"I'm done," he hastily declares. In his tone is the stricken resignation of the long-besieged commander who bows to fate and strikes his colors. "He's an infernal loafer, but if you are going to cry for him you shall have him."

The "infernal loafer" alluded to is Dub. Guinevere does not smile too promptly. She realizes that sadness is a valuable asset and not to be cast lightly away. She will have the elderly

gentleman sign, seal and deliver a most binding contract before she smiles again.

"If he would only show one brief burst of speed—if for just once in his indolent career he would go some—have one spasm of energy—then it would be easier for me," sighs the worsted parent. "In that event I could at least fold to my heart the honors of war."

"I wonder where he is now?" murmurs Guinevere softly.

At this exact moment the calm of the boardwalk is rent with sudden outcry and commotion. Its placid tide of humanity and clothes begins to swirl and eddy about some center of excitement. Guinevere turns. So does the elderly gentleman. They can see it all quite distinctly. An aged and infirm lady, unaccompanied by male escort, is belaboring a husky young giant with an umbrella, which she grasps in her right hand. Her left clings tenaciously to a prehistoric reticule which perhaps contains two hairpins, a sample of mousseline de soie, three dimes and a return ticket to Hackensack. The young man is strenuously endeavoring to gain possession of the reticule. He is the stronger of the two. He wrests the prize from the old lady's enfeebled hands. She stretches both arms toward high heaven invoking vengeance, and collapses on the boardwalk. The young man, with a quick, villainous glance to right and left, applies hot haste to his getaway. It is up to the young man to run. He runs.

A wheel chair impedes his progress. It contains two corpulent French gentlemen, who are animatedly talking with their hands. A collision is inevitable. It ensues. The corpulent French gentlemen alight on the backs of their necks and commence to spin on their collar buttons. The young man is up and on his way.

Guinevere turns with a sudden paling of her cheeks. The elderly gentleman raises a dripping finger of scorn and points to the fleeing figure.

"I believe you asked where he was," suggests the elderly gentleman in tones of some irony. "There he is."

It is too true. This is Dub Van

Zoandsoster, and he is working out the quarter in something like twenty-four seconds flat. In the words of the form sheet, he is full of run and fighting for his head. Yet he does not seem satisfied with his progress, for as he goes he is consistently picking up speed. In his predatory right hand he firmly clutches the venerable lady's bag. Behind him trails a ruck of pursuing humanity—also picking up speed. The boardwalk is not wide enough. They interfere with each other. They fall prone to the earth. Others fall upon them. Dub sees across his path a baby in a perambulator, propelled by a Brooklynite. He hurdles it in his stride. I wish I could describe his progress in detail. I have a gift for action, and this is action after my own heart. But they wouldn't let me describe Guinevere, and now I refuse to describe anything. You will have to be satisfied with bulletins from the front. Of course it's a poor method—like hearing a Suburban called off in a poolroom—but blame the Editor, not me.

12:31 P. M. Two policemen attempt interference. Collision . . . officers in tangle . . . Dub rating easily along. Leads by three lengths of open daylight. 12:31¼ P. M. Lifesaver climbs over railing . . . Dub connects Jack Johnson narcotic with point of lifesaver's jaw . . . lifesaver falls asleep. Drops on sand below . . . 12:31½ P. M. Hostile party, including officers, form line to bar advance . . . Dub executes flank movement onto pier . . . eludes hostile party. 12:31¾ P. M. Dignified gentleman in top hat and frock coat rises up at edge of pier brandishing cane . . . Dub makes flying tackle . . . dignified gentleman, hat, cane, Dub, etc., disappear into Atlantic Ocean. 12:32 P. M. Dub and dignified gentleman rise struggling . . . top hat floating . . . also cane. 12:33 P. M. Two muscular bathers reinforce dignified gentleman. 12:34-12:35 P. M. Fierce naval engagement transpires. 12:37 P. M. Assailants beaten off. 12:45 P. M. Dub diminishes in distance, invincibly swimming toward Liverpool.

"Have you observed enough?" po-

lately inquires the elder Van Zoand-soster.

"Quite," breathes Guinevere faintly. "Let's go to the hotel."

The Atlantic is opalescent. It is night. A large lemon-colored moon climbs the eastern sky. A lady, very beautiful in her deep distress, sits alone in a shaded corner of a hotel veranda. Deeply she sighs. A tall young man comes stealthily around the angle of the wall. He pauses cautiously, with the manner of one who apprehends the possibility of meeting a stout, elderly gentleman. "Guinevere!" he breathes with ecstasy. "It is I, Dub."

The lady turns upon him an unflinching and frigid glance.

"I have just learned that you were here, Guinevere—dearest. I have been quite busy—"

"You seemed quite occupied when I saw you," admits the Goddess.

"When you saw me!" echoes Mr. Van Zoandsoster. "What—what—did I seem to be doing?"

"You were spilling old ladies, tramping down young babies, making war on the police, pitching white-haired gentlemen into the ocean and—and similar trifles."

"But, surely you don't suppose—"

"Oh, no," purrs Guinevere sweetly. "Of course I don't suppose anything—although I saw it myself."

"It is rather difficult to explain so many things at once," admits Mr. Van Zoandsoster.

Guinevere rises from her chair with stately grace.

"Yes, I can quite understand that it would be," she comments. "Good night," and she has vanished.

A week elapses.

"A note, ma'am." Huggins deposits an envelope beside Guinevere's untasted grapefruit. She opens it and two theater tickets drop to the damask. The note is typewritten and mysterious.

MADAMOISELLE:

Attend the vaudeville performance this evening at the Gotham Roof Garden, and certain matters which now perplex you will

be made clear. Disregard this and you will fall a prey to the tortures of curiosity. You are a woman—be warned against such a fate.
WELL WISHER.

P. S. Bring your father. He will enjoy the show.

The Gotham curtain rises on the first number. The S. R. O. placard hangs at the box office. Yet a chair beside Guinevere is vacant. A prefatory legend appears, announcing the motion pictures.

The legend vanishes. The trembling film unrolls itself. . . . *An aged and infirm lady, unaccompanied by male escort, is belaboring a husky young giant with an umbrella which she grasps in her right hand. . . .*

Guinevere bends eagerly forward. She begins to understand. She steals a glance sidewise. The erstwhile empty chair is occupied by a young gentleman who is not looking at the pictures. He is looking at her. He smiles. Despite the fact that his eyes meet those of the elder Van Zoandsoster, they continue to smile.

"Do you realize"—the articulation of the elder Van Zoandsoster is troubled; it is almost as though he had a bone in his throat—"do you realize that everyone here recognizes you in that vulgar employment?"

"It may not have occurred to you," suggests Dub amiably, "but there is dignity in labor—nobility in toil."

Livid spots begin to spread on the elderly gentleman's neck.

"May I inquire if grotesque posing before a runaway camera is to be your permanent vocation?"

"That and similar enterprises—unless, of course," Dub considerably amends, "you feel that the strenuousness of my labor is imperilling the family dignity." Dub's hand chances to come in contact with one of Guinevere's and stays put.

Guinevere's cheeks begin to burgeon like young peach orchards, and the rose petals of her lips part upon the miracle of her smile. But the Editor won't let me describe Guinevere.

"Papa," she sweetly observes, "he did show a burst of speed, you know. You saw it yourself."

THE DESERT ROAD

By Marjorie L. C. Pickthall

CUTHBERTSON, urging his jaded horse over the last of the weary miles from the mines to Los Santos, always pulled up at old Juana's hut. He had pulled up one day when new to the work and the land, deathly sunsick, and Juana had dragged him into the shadow of the wall, and given him water, and finally tramped into town for the superintendent's buggy and mules. Cuthbertson never found out why she did this, but he was grateful in the silent way he had early learned of the desert. Since then she always had cool water for him, and a skin spread in the shade, and sometimes she would talk to him in clumsy Spanish. He was the only white man she ever spoke to; and she spoke to him because she thought him like the Rainmaker.

Even so, he knew very little about her. If you asked anyone in Los Santos how long Juana had been there, they said, "God knows."

There were peach orchards around Los Santos, and the sound of running water, and pleasant acreage of alfalfa fields. But where the water stopped, there all green life stopped also; and westward of the last irrigation ditch lay the gray desert, oldest of all things save the sea. When the east wind blew by day across Los Santos, the scent and bloom of the orchards was breathed out into the sands. But at sunset, when the chill west wind brought the bitter sting of the alkali, the little town seemed to cower and shrink beleaguered in the heart of the vast night. Only the steady sound of running water, like the foot-fall of a sentry, stood between Los Santos and the eternal threat of the sand.

The road ran through the town and

out into the desert, pausing a moment at the mines, and then losing itself among the colored hills of the far distance. No rain fell on the road. No rain fell on the hills, which were like great jewels worn brittle and thin with ceaseless wind and sun. Whoever had business with the desert went by that road; some few returned by it. And at the foot of the hills, between the town and the mines, beside a tiny pool that dried to white dust in the heat, was Juana's hut.

When there was water in the pool, she grew a few melons and a patch of corn. When it dried, she fetched water from the tanks miles away. She had a pot hanging under the roof of her hut to keep cool, and in the drip of it gray lizards and snakes and earth-colored birds would gather silently. They were voiceless creatures of the voiceless waste. But not more dumb than old Juana.

Every evening she climbed to the crest of a long wave of sand and watched the sun going down at the end of the desert road. She saw the night sweeping inward visibly with a movement that was as a sound—the sound of huge wings trailed above the sand. Then the stars glowed out in the transparent heights of darkness, the lights of Los Santos twinkled within their defenses, and over the curve of the world one high light answered from the mines. Then she made prayer and slept, knowing that day no word would come from the Rainmaker.

Once, looking at Cuthbertson with her strange, grave eyes, she said: "Hate is more patient than day or night, the sand is more patient than hate, and love is more patient than the sand."

Cuthbertson leaned his head back in the shadow. Westward a mirage danced in the heat, and the crumbling rainless hills seemed to lift from the level of blue water and the living green of reeds. "I don't like the sand, Juana."

Old Juana laid her clenched hand on her breast. "I hate it. The sand takes youth, and strength, and comeliness, and quickness of wit, and the memory of the gods. But it cannot take the desire of the heart." Her eyes glinted at him suspiciously as a snake's. "I am only an old woman of the sands, yet they have taught me there is one thing stronger."

Cuthbertson sighed, thinking of the machinery abandoned at Lost Hope when the water dried. "I've found nothing stronger than the sand," he said grimly, "but tell me about it." He had a queer liking for the old woman, and he was grateful; besides, if she would talk he might profit to the extent of a paper for the Smithsonian.

Juana looked out over the desert with an expressionless face. "It is a long time since I was a girl, when the young men fluted to me in the cool of the evening and in the maize dance my shadow was blessed. The Rainmaker was my husband."

Cuthbertson shifted in the shadow, and the dry leather of his long boots creaked.

"There was no town then, and no mine. Only the cuttings of the Lost People in the mesas, and this little pool. We came here, my man and I together. He said: 'Stay here and rest; it is a good place. I am going to look for turquoise in the hills, and when I find another good place I will send a word. Then follow.' He lifted my long black hair and touched my face and went. I watched him as he went down the road into the wings of the sunset. Then I went back to my water jars and waited."

"Yes, Juana, what about him?"

"There is no more. I am waiting still for the word that tells me to follow. But it does not come. Somewhere between here and there"—she pointed to the vacant glare beyond the hills—"the sand took him."

"The sand?"

"Yes. The wind blew and the sand took him while he slept, perhaps. Or perhaps the water had gone. I do not know. But if he had lived I should have seen his face or heard his voice; and I see him only in dreams of the night, hear him only when the dawn wind meets the night wind above the Lost Graves of the mesas. There be many such."

"And you're still waiting for word from the Rainmaker?"

"There is nothing else to do." Juana would say no more.

Cuthbertson rode into Los Santos silently that night, thinking of many things, and the Smithsonian was not one of them. He went to bed early at the superintendent's house, the superintendent's daughter having found him forgetful of her songs; and he slept to the faint whispering of the blown sand on the iron roof. Sand and yellowed peach leaves rustled on the floor of his room. And he dreamed all night of a nameless Indian who had gone to look for turquoise in the hills, years and years ago. "Is there anyone," he found himself crying with a kind of passion to the night, "who would wait like that for me?" And he rode on his way before breakfast without saying good-bye to the superintendent's daughter. Old Juana had set him a new standard of the soul.

Thereafter, as he rode into the hills and to and from the mines in the endless search for water and wealth, he thought very much of Juana and the Rainmaker. Old Juana being an established fact, his thoughts went chiefly to the Rainmaker, the nameless dead man who still lived for one old woman. Riding up the stony arroyos, through the wine-red gateways of the hills, the sun blistering his bridle hand and the hot Southwest drying his lungs, he began to reconstruct the Rainmaker's journey from the pool beside Los Santos. It amused him to map it out mentally, all in pale colors and copper plate lines, as the journeys of the Apostle were shown in the back of the Bible he had at school. That mental map of his grew to be a

very logical and pretty thing, and he spent most of his time adding to it. And then, after the manner of men who lead lonely lives in such places, where the wind can give death and the sun madness, he began to see the thing of which he dreamed.

The first time it happened he rode to Los Santos and wired to Mesa City for a case of medicines. He dosed himself variously. But his doses did not affect those obscure brain cells or nerve centers which were thrown out of balance. They went on busily building for him the bodily likeness of the Rainmaker.

As the thing went on, and his mind remained otherwise unshaken, he began to regard it scientifically, as befitted one who had all the Smithsonian reports in his little packing case of an office at the mines. He kept methodical notes in a diary:

"April 7.—Found reputed spring near the Presidio pass. Water strongly impregnated mineral salts. (Cf. analyst's report on sample.) Horse would not drink of it. Saw Rainmaker again. Hallucination commenced 11.45 and continued till 12.04. He walked parallel with us at a distance of some 25 feet. Headband of antelope skin and circlets of copper or gold; turquoise on right hand. Appearance very vivid. Thought at first it was real Indian, like the one I rode down last week and had to keep quiet with a dollar (Mexican). Noticed at last that his hair, which is very long, did not move in the wind. Face seemed turned away as usual, or indistinct. Letter from Macnamara re sale of machinery at Lost Hope. Bay pony injured.

"April 18.—Sale of machinery fallen through: advised selling for old iron: Mac too thrifty to make money here. Saw Rainmaker suddenly walking along the sand parallel with us as usual. Very exceptional that he really does walk instead of sliding along like a magic lantern picture. Have the idea, too, that face is not turned so far away as it was; apparition otherwise somewhat indistinct against violet stratifications. Had to shoot bay pony. Sorry.

"April 25.—Hallucinations becoming

more frequent. During hallucinations, pulse and respiration apparently normal; so I suppose it's overwork. Rainmaker joined us today an hour east of the Presidio pools. Very vivid, but lasted only ten minutes. Would cause me no uneasiness but that the face is being undoubtedly turned toward me. Ought properly to remain unchanged. Apparitions coincide remarkably with supposed route of journey. (N. B. Logical effect of subconscious on conscious ideas?) Sand moving badly in these winds; lower end of Presidio pass drifted up. (Query: Should I tell old Juana?)"

Cuthbertson kept silence as a lonely child keeps silence over the visualization of his imaginary playfellows. He was keenly interested, and only at times a little afraid. The appearance always came in exactly the same way, and after a while he began to watch for it as if for a friend's face. Turning a corner, after some day of unusual stress, he would find himself riding parallel with an Indian, who walked through the sand about twenty-five feet away as a tired man walks. Then Cuthbertson would say to his pony, "There's the Rainmaker," and watch. The pony never paid any attention, and the moving figure never came any nearer. Through it there always ran a certain flicker of indistinctness, as through a mirage. And like a mirage it shook and thinned and went out. Perhaps it was the lonely child coming to the surface in the lonely man that made Cuthbertson, as the vision passed, lift hand to the brim of his Stetson with a soft "*Vaya con Dios—Go with God.*"

The machinery at Lost Hope found a purchaser at last, and Cuthbertson, through three blinding hot weeks, had to see it taken apart and numbered and packed on muleback to the Los Santos line. Mules died and men sickened; heads grew light and tempers uncertain. For these three weeks Cuthbertson had no thought to spare by day or night to the Rainmaker or the route map. So he saw nothing.

He rode back to the mines, alone and tired out, sitting his tired pony like a sack. The hills reeled in the afternoon

heat; the desert was a grayish glare under a sky so hot it had no color in it. Cuthbertson was waiting thirstily for the hour when the sun would go, the dark sweep in on vast wings and the mesas stand up in the evening, royal with color, like the ruined foundations of some apocalyptic city forgotten of God. He looked about him as he rode, as though half consciously waiting for something. Presently he remembered that he was waiting for the Rainmaker. Then, as he turned down a shallow arroyo set with the dried and mummied plants of dead yuccas, he saw the little white dazzle of the eyes that heralded the vision.

"There's the Rainmaker," he said as usual: the map was clear in his brain. "But I didn't think he'd been so far west." The Rainmaker was walking through the sand as usual, as a tired man walks; with a little jump of the pulses, Cuthbertson saw that this time the face was fully turned toward him.

He sickened for one strange instant, fearing, with a fear as old as the desert, the shadow of his own dream. But the face, uncertainly seen through the flicker of heat, was only that of a young Indian of the sands, lean, grave, watchful. The headband had a gleam of copper or gold; the hair fell long and straight. And beneath it the eyes were directed, not at Cuthbertson, but intently beyond him to the east, along the desert road.

"You're looking for Juana," cried Cuthbertson, quick as a flash. "I know."

He reined in. But the figure moved on, still looking to the east. Against an outcrop of honey-yellow rock it broke and went out. Cuthbertson shook up the horse and followed slowly.

The rock was surrounded with great waves of loose sand that drifted perpetually before the prevailing winds. Sometimes it was buried, sometimes bare to the sky. Now as Cuthbertson stooped from the saddle, he saw that the wind had uncovered a little worn hollow of the rock, and in it a pale glitter of color. He dismounted. The glitter of color

was a piece of turquoise veined with gold.

He had it in his hand. Then, slowly, he stooped and took out what else there was from the keeping of the desert. These he tied in his handkerchief and fastened to the saddle, and his fingers shook a little over the knot. Mounting, he rode on; and at the foot of the canyon he looked back gravely, his hand at the salute.

"Rest with God."

It was late before he stopped at old Juana's hut. She sat just within, her chin on her knees, staring out at the low, steady stars.

"Juana—" Cuthbertson's voice was very tired.

"Enter, my son." Her eyes gleamed in the dusk, watchful and steady as a snake's. But Cuthbertson would not enter.

"The sand has given up something," he said, "something it has held for a long, long time in the pass beyond the pools, under a yellow rock. Perhaps it's a word for you, Juana, perhaps for someone else. I don't know; you told me once that the sand gripped hard as the grave."

"But the hold of the heart is stronger." Old Juana raised her head.

Silently Cuthbertson stooped across the threshold, laying the beautiful veined turquoise at her feet. And with it what had been a man's hand.

The sand had dealt with it so long that it was no more terrible than a child's broken toy of bone and leather. The night wind moved it as it lay, lightly as the yellowed leaves of the peach orchards, on Juana's mat. A square turquoise, bound in gold wire, shifted on the forefinger. Cuthbertson showed it silently.

"It is the Rainmaker's ring," said old Juana at last. "The word has come."

Cuthbertson bent his head. "There was nothing more. Just the turquoise in a little hollow, and the hand, kind of keeping it—"

"He was keeping it safe for me," said Juana quietly.

"No more. Everything else the sand had taken, long ago." His horse shifted

restlessly outside, and he moved to leave. He was deadly tired in body and soul, and lonely of heart.

Juana sat motionless, but her eyes glowed. "It is the word," she said again contentedly. "I have waited a long time. Now I can go."

"Go with God," answered Cuthbertson, in deep Spanish, as he mounted and rode on to Los Santos.

And, when he was out of hearing, Juana went. She placed her water jar where the lizards might reach it, and scattered her ground corn on the sand. What the desert had yielded to her again she hid in her bosom with little mur-

mured words. Behind her the lights of Los Santos twinkled within the guarding water, and ahead the lonely light from the mines shone across the curve of the world. But as she went down the desert road her face was to the stars. Before her the clear dusk parted as in welcome; behind her it closed in, a tender barrier to be passed no more. Above her was the infinite heaven, and the hosts of it; under her feet the sand that took all things, youth and power and worship, but might not wholly take love.

Juana was going to join her man in a good place.



THE DWELLING

By Clinton Scollard

I MAY not dwell where olives shake
 Their silver o'er the silver lake,
 Nor where the citron sheds its snow
 At dawning or at sunset glow,
 And nightingales their music make!

I may not dwell where palm trees set
 Against the sky their silhouette,
 Nor where the silences are filled
 With attars cunningly distilled
 Of blended rose and mignonette!

What matters it where'er it be
 My dwelling lies, by land or sea,
 If, while the days of life slip past
 Toward the great ocean vague and vast,
 I may but dwell with Memory!



WHEREIN we differ from others we are individual; wherein others differ from us they are eccentric.



WHEN a man speaks slightly of himself he feels that he is rendering a minority report.

HOME

By Sophie Irene Loeb

WHERE the family skeleton hasn't any funnybone.
Where a telephone is a device by which men escape coming home to dinner.
Where the fire of love may be covered with ashes of poverty.
Where the key is changed from B natural to two sharps.
Where the sins of the fathers are the excuses of the children.
Where the family tree has many fallen leaves.
Where the family cupboard has many borrowed dishes.
Where the family ties are often knotted.
Where "please," "thank you" and "beg pardon" are reserved for visitors.
Where a wife's relative and a friend are two different things.
Where many a man who plays the king finds his wife is ace high.
Where Tolerance, Tenacity and Tact may be the three ruling muses.



DITES! QUE FAUT-IL FAIRE?

By Hortense Flexner

WE climbed the hill to see the moonlight lie,
As misty water in the valley's bowl;
It was the night when summer, called to die,
Yielded the utmost fragrance of her soul
To death's first kiss. A gentle earth wind blew;
Drowsy with falling leaves or dreams of May,
We stood to watch. Tell me, what could we do—
Alas, what could we say?

The shadows fell upon us like dim hands,
Enchanted, deft, and wove a subtle snare;
The moonlight bound us in frail silver bands,
And then—I felt your lips upon my hair,
Forgot the vow, lifting my face to you,
And could not turn, nor draw my eyes away.
The night sang low. Tell me, what could we do—
Alas, what could we say?

HARRISON

By V. Fetherstonhaugh

CHARACTERS

MRS. GASCOIGNE
MONTAGUE GASCOIGNE (*her son*)
HARRISON (*MRS. GASCOIGNE's maid*)
MR. BASCOM (*a parson*)
MRS. BASCOM (*the parson's wife*)
MR. MALCOLM (*a millionaire*)
MRS. MALCOLM
AN OFFICER

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *Scene I—A steamship.
Scene II—A hotel.*

SCENE—*The deck of a liner. Passengers in coats and furs are walking up and down or sitting in deck chairs. A little apart from the rest sit MONTY GASCOIGNE and his mother, a good-looking woman of about fifty-five, expensively dressed in good furs. He is a little over thirty; he has very good features and looks distinguished.*

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Now tell me anything amusing there is to tell about the passengers. You must have picked up a certain amount of scandal by this time.

GASCOIGNE

I don't think I have—much. I'm usually in the smoking room, playing bridge.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Well, that's the only promising place for scandal on a ship. Women daren't talk scandal till they know each other really well.

GASCOIGNE

There are the usual mild flirtations going on, of course. Nothing at all interesting so far. There is some pretty high play going on, too, in one set—and a select set it is! A fellow called Malcolm is the leading light. He's a mil-

lionaire, I believe, and a bounder, I know, with a very handsome wife.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Oh, yes; Harrison was talking about her. She—do you think she is his wife?

GASCOIGNE

Very likely not, I should think. He's very civil to her, and that type of brute isn't apt to be civil to his wife.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Harrison disapproves of her, strongly. She has a French maid who sits next to Harrison at meals. Harrison disapproves of her, too.

GASCOIGNE

Harrison's range of disapprovals is a wide one. Is there anything in the

world so hopelessly respectable as a respectable maid?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I doubt it. They are soaked in it. I know Harrison secretly thinks it a pity that the Scriptures were not translated into elegant Victorian English so that the primeval curse should read that in the perspiration of his countenance Adam should procure his livelihood. She is much too proper to suggest in so many words that Mr. Malcolm is traveling with a lady who is not his wife, but the way she shuts her eyes when she mentions Mrs. Malcolm is enough to blast any woman's reputation. Where is the lady? Point her out. Is she really pretty?

GASCOIGNE

No. Handsome. Black hair, white skin, gray eyes. Good figure. Quite attractive—in her own way. Clever and quite amusing. Not troubled with Harrison's complaint.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

You know her?

GASCOIGNE

Oh, yes. I've talked to her now and then. She's too good for Malcolm, whether as his wife or not. You wouldn't like her.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I had gathered so much from Harrison. I want to see her. I've had altogether too much of Harrison lately. Plus seasickness, she is depressing. I should enjoy a few shocks. It must be very dull to have a thoroughly proper mind and unerringly correct feelings.

GASCOIGNE

Still they are useful qualities in a maid.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Certainly. But do you suppose that Harrison is really the same all through? Is she absolutely content to be nothing but a perfect maid? Has she no ordinary human feelings? Or is her mind really concentrated upon her duties to myself?

GASCOIGNE

He'd be a bold man who would make love to Harrison! She'd make a polar bear feel chilly! Yet she's not unattractive in her prim way, and she'd be quite good-looking if she were only alive. Now I come to think of it, she is really rather like Mrs. Malcolm—with all the light left out. She has much the same coloring.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Harrison would have a fit if she heard you! Here she comes!

(HARRISON comes up. *She is dressed in black. Her face is pale. She has a low-pitched voice, and speaks grammatically and with a good accent.*)

HARRISON

Are you ready to come down, ma'am?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

No, I'm not. I shall stay up quite late. I'm tired to death of my cabin.

HARRISON

May I bring you anything, ma'am? Are you warm enough?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Quite. No, I don't want anything at present. Mr. Montague will come and tell you when I do.

(HARRISON goes off. *The electric lights have been turned on. Presently a tall woman in a long light gray coat with a scarf wound round her head comes out with a heavy, coarsely made man, and they walk together, talking and laughing rather loudly.*)

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I suppose that is Mrs. Malcolm. She is certainly good-looking, but I don't admire her taste in men. (After a pause) Don't stop out here, Monty; I know you're dying for bridge. Go and have a rubber and then come back and look me up. I'm quite happy here watching people after being shut up so long.

GASCOIGNE

Well, if you really don't mind, mother. Don't get cold. Have my rug.

(*He gets up and tucks his own rug round her, then leaves her. The night has*

grown very dark. It has come on to rain, but the deck is sheltered and there is little wind, so nobody takes any notice. Suddenly something happens. A sort of vibration, distinct from that of the engines, runs through the ship; then a jar, as if she had stopped suddenly, but the engines are still going, and in the dense blackness it is impossible to be sure that she is not still moving. The shock has not been violent enough to be terrifying, yet it has startled everyone. No one expresses serious alarm.)

VARIOUS PASSENGERS

What has happened? . . . Are we aground? . . . Collision? . . . Have we stopped? . . . Has the engine broken down? . . . Where's the Captain? . . . Ask the Doctor. He was here a minute ago. He'd know. . . . He wouldn't know any more than I should. . . . Well, I thought he counted as an officer. He wears a uniform. (*This in a plaintive feminine voice*) . . . So does the boy who blows the bugle; go and find him. (*In a sarcastic masculine voice*)

(*The engines stop and excitement grows a little keener. Everyone pours out on deck and voices rise to a babel. At last an officer comes.*)

OFFICER

There has been an accident. We are on the Trap Rocks, but there is no danger at present, as we are stuck fast and there is no sea on. You can all go to bed if you like. You will be warned if the slightest danger arises, and there are boats enough for all the passengers if necessary. We shall probably be soon in communication with other ships.

(*The passengers flutter about uncertainly; some of them obviously nervous, some making light of it, others very much annoyed. Among the latter is MALCOLM, who gives vent to a great deal of strong language on the subject of the ship, her captain and officers. The woman with him listens with an air of detached amusement. A clergyman, who is standing by, turns on him suddenly.*)

PARSON

Considering that we might as a result of this accident be now at the bottom of

the sea, I think thanksgiving would be more suitable than profanity, Mr. Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Considering that if there had been no accident we should now be on our way to our destination instead of sticking to a rock in a place where the ship has no business to be at all, I see no cause for thanksgiving! If, as I suppose you hold, the Almighty is responsible, I'm damned if I see why we should be thankful to Him for not making matters worse; why doesn't He prevent accidents altogether if He can?

(*MRS. MALCOLM laughs.*)

PARSON

May He forgive your blasphemy!

MALCOLM

I've spoken none. I only asked a question, but no parson ever answers a straight question.

GASCOIGNE (*returning*)

Are you willing to go to your cabin, mother, or would you rather stay here? I believe there really is no danger; at any rate, for the present.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I think I'll stay here. Harrison can bring me my hot water bottle and get me a cup of cocoa, and then I shall be quite warm and comfortable.

(*GASCOIGNE goes in search of the maid. Some of the passengers disappear. Others settle themselves in their chairs or walk restlessly about. It is quite still and very dark and the rain keeps falling. GASCOIGNE reappears, and is soon followed by HARRISON, who looks as calm as ever. She puts the hot water bottle at MRS. GASCOIGNE'S feet and rearranges her rugs.*)

HARRISON (*to GASCOIGNE*)

Is there really no danger, sir?

GASCOIGNE

I believe not. Do you feel nervous?

HARRISON

No, sir, but it's dreadful to think how many there are on board to drown if the

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ship should sink—and so unprepared, some of them! Mrs. Malcolm's maid is carrying on dreadfully.

GASCOIGNE

They'll let us know in plenty of time if there is any real danger. So you can go to bed in peace if you like. I'll look after Mrs. Gascoigne.

HARRISON

Thank you, sir, but I could not dream of going to bed while Mrs. Gascoigne is still up. She may want me later on. *(She goes off.)*

GASCOIGNE *(sitting down by his mother)*

I've been talking to the second officer. He says we're all right at present. Can't account for the accident—we ought to be at least ten miles south. Well, if the wind gets up—the tide will begin to rise soon, and by high tide, if there is any sea on, we might float off; and then, as our whole side may be ripped out—

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Down we should go! But I suppose there are lots of boats.

GASCOIGNE

So they say. Enough for all the passengers, I suppose, at any rate. But it is almost certain that some other ship will come to our help before high tide.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Well, I don't want to climb into a nasty bobbing little boat and drift about for days in the cold, and I shall stick to the ship as long as possible.

GASCOIGNE

Then I should try to go to sleep if I were you, dear.

(A solitary figure comes slowly along the deck, stops and leans on the rail, looking out into the darkness. The lights on deck have been turned off, but in the faint glow from the ports of the music room they can see that it is MRS. MALCOLM.)

(Later. Dawn is breaking. MONTY GASCOIGNE and the PARSON are standing

together; a few other small groups are to be seen, all composed of men; a few passengers, several stewards, ship's officers and some of the crew. Most of them are wearing heavy coats; a strong wind is blowing. Now and then a light shower of spray splashes on deck; the waves are breaking almost broadside against the ship.)

PARSON

This may be the end of a brilliant and promising career for you, Mr. Gascoigne. You might easily be forgiven for regretting it. I, at least, have nothing to regret in that line.

GASCOIGNE

On the other hand, you have more family ties—your wife and children.

PARSON

They will be provided for, I feel assured. Better perhaps than in my lifetime. I've been a sad failure in most ways. The world will get on very well without me.

GASCOIGNE

We can most of us say that.

PARSON

Yes. That's true. But you must have found life singularly interesting. A diplomatist sees so much of what is most thrilling in modern life; the inner working of the machinery which moves the seeming rulers of the world.

GASCOIGNE

I do find life interesting, even though it has its sordid side in my profession, but I hope to find it increasingly so in the future.

PARSON

You mean—

GASCOIGNE

Wherever I may find what I call myself when I leave my body under that chilly-looking sea.

PARSON

Do you believe in the future life from a religious or scientific point of view, Mr. Gascoigne?

GASCOIGNE

What a curious question! Why not from both?

PARSON

Well—it would be rather absurd to start a theological discussion just now when we are probably at the door of a house of knowledge larger than we have any idea of.

(While they are talking, a figure wearing a man's ulster and cloth cap steps out on deck and comes slowly up behind them. The sleeves cover the hands and the coat altogether seems too large for the wearer. GASCOIGNE turns quickly to see who it is.)

GASCOIGNE (horrificed)

Harrison! What are you doing here?

HARRISON *(calmly but with a sort of exultation)*

The same as you are, I suppose, Mr. Gascoigne: waiting for the ship to go down.

GASCOIGNE

Why didn't you go in the boat with Mrs. Gascoigne?

HARRISON

Why didn't you go yourself?

GASCOIGNE

Only the women and children went in the first boats, besides the crew. Then one of the boats was smashed—so some had to be left behind. I preferred to stay.

HARRISON

And I preferred to stay—with you, Mr. Gascoigne.

(GASCOIGNE stares at her in astonishment. Even in the pale light he can see how transformed she is. Her eyes look dark and lustrous and her face is glowing with color. She looks positively beautiful. He moves toward her, and the PARSON moves away.)

GASCOIGNE

My dear girl! What can you mean?

HARRISON *(speaking rapidly, her eyes on his face)*

I'd rather—a hundred times rather—drown with you than live with anyone

else in a palace! I'm thanking God for letting me tell you this without shame. However you may feel about it, it makes me mad with joy to tell you that I love you!

(He finds her hands and draws her toward him.)

GASCOIGNE

So that's what it means to be a woman! I never thought of it before. Would you never have told me if this had not happened?

HARRISON

Never! How could I? Your mother's maid! You're not the kind that flirts with ladies' maids or I wouldn't ever have cared for you—and I'm not the kind of maid that gentlemen flirt with! I've never let you guess, have I? And I've loved you ever since that first time I saw you when you came home to spend Christmas three years ago! But now we'll both be dead before sunrise, and I can say what I like!

GASCOIGNE

You deliberately disguised yourself in those clothes in order to—

HARRISON

To stay with you? Of course I did! When we had got Mrs. Gascoigne safely into the boat I saw you were not coming, so I said I must go back for something. The boat was nearly full then—the next was still half empty, so when the first put off I suppose she thought I would be in the second. I went to your cabin and found these. When I got back on deck I heard that one boat had been smashed, so then I knew there wouldn't be room for everyone. There were plenty more worth saving than me. I hope some good man got my place. He's welcome to it. I knew you wouldn't take it if you had the chance. I knew you would be one of those who would choose to be left behind.

GASCOIGNE

Come out of the wind, little girl; I can't save you, but perhaps I can shelter you a bit until the end comes. Good

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Lord! I don't know how I feel! You make me awfully proud—and yet I never felt so worthless in my life.

(He kisses her hands and then her cheek, and, holding her closely to him, moves to the sheltered corner where his mother's chair is still standing. He makes her sit down on it and puts wraps over her, and then kneels down beside the chair, making her rest her head on his shoulder.)

The PARSON remains alone, looking out over the sea. Another figure clad in rough coat and yachting cap steps out on deck, and, after a moment's hesitation, joins him.)

PARSON *(astonished)*
Mrs. Malcolm!

MRS. MALCOLM
If you like.

PARSON
Why are you not with the other women?

MRS. MALCOLM
I'd rather be here.

PARSON
Where is your husband?

MRS. MALCOLM
That I can't tell you. I've not set eyes on him for years.

PARSON
Mr. Malcolm—

MRS. MALCOLM
Is not my husband, thank Heaven!

PARSON
Where is he, anyhow?

MRS. MALCOLM
Out there somewhere. Probably cursing and very wet.

PARSON
Brute!

MRS. MALCOLM
Oh, no. He values his life—and I'm not the sort of woman men die for. No doubt he took it for granted I'd take care of myself; I'm quite capable of it. As it happened, I saw that prim lady's maid's little game, and it struck me as rather fine, so I followed suit. I know

why she did it. I saw her go to Gascoigne's cabin and take down one of his coats and kiss it before she put it on! Nice little fool! I loved her for it. Have you seen her?

PARSON
She's over there, with Mr. Gascoigne.

MRS. MALCOLM
Good! She deserves it. I hope he is playing the game.

PARSON
He was certainly deeply touched—

MRS. MALCOLM
That's all right then. She'll be quite contented with that. One brief hour of glorious life, and then—I wonder what? Hell for me, I suppose, my holy friend?
(She lights a cigarette with some difficulty owing to the wind, but succeeds by sheltering the flame behind her companion's back.)

PARSON
What was your motive in remaining on board?

MRS. MALCOLM
Do you think there is one person among the lot less worth saving than myself? I doubt it. I didn't feel like crowding any useful citizen out of a place. I'd have given my seat to you if I'd known you wanted one. You ought to have gone with your excellent wife.

PARSON
I don't think those of my profession have any right to cling to life as if it were a matter of great importance. My wife will be provided for by the God in whom I trust.

MRS. MALCOLM *(turning to him with a smile)*
You're not very fond of her, are you?

PARSON *(taken aback)*
What!

MRS. MALCOLM
It was almost a relief to part, wasn't it, from a petty-minded woman who has hampered your career and derided your ideals ever since you married her?

PARSON

How did you know? I mean—what makes you think so?

MRS. MALCOLM

Your face—and hers. You poor little saint! I fancy you leave the task of providing for her to the Almighty with a thankful heart.

(He does not answer. She smokes her cigarette with evident enjoyment, while they both look out across the gradually lightening sea.)

MRS. MALCOLM

Shall I leave you alone? Do you want your last hours for meditation?

PARSON *(looking at her curiously)*

Not particularly. If I am not now prepared to meet my Maker, an extra hour of prayer will not do me much good. If I can be of any help to you—Are you not at all afraid?

MRS. MALCOLM

I'm not afraid. I'm not even excited. I've learned to take things as they come. Life has failed to amuse me for a long time. Death will deprive me of nothing I value.

PARSON

And the hereafter?

MRS. MALCOLM

Is there one? I have followed many theories in my time, and, like old Omar, always "came out by the same door as in I went."

PARSON

Yet you have in you the divine spark which even the life you have lived has never been able to quench.

MRS. MALCOLM

How do you know?

PARSON

You are here awaiting death for the sake of someone who is not even known to you.

MRS. MALCOLM

I've told you I'm sick of life and the whole thing. Now Gascoigne must have found life pleasant enough. I really re-

spect him for staying behind. He's rich and brilliant, and just starting on a most interesting career. Though in London we moved in different orbits, as you may imagine, I used to hear a good deal about him. And he is about to become food for fishes in company with his mother's maid! Has that little business been going on for long, do you suppose?

PARSON

I'm sure it has not. I overheard a few words she said when she came on deck just now. She, poor thing, has evidently had an attachment for him, but without letting him have any idea of it until now.

MRS. MALCOLM

What fools women are! He's quite the wrong sort of man for a maid to fall in love with. Well, I suppose she's happy now. Odd, isn't it—what we call love? Do you understand it at all, or does it lie outside the pale of clerical experience?

PARSON

In our church the clergy are not forbidden to marry—

MRS. MALCOLM *(laughing)*

My dear man, I know that. But do most of them marry for love?

PARSON

For what else?

MRS. MALCOLM

To get "helpmates"! A person who will do half the parish work without being paid for it; who doesn't want to spend much money on her clothes or have any tiresome opinions of her own. Well, no man *loves* that kind of woman! He feels a "deep affection" for her, but she usually bores him to death! The woman a man loves is the one he can never feel sure of.

PARSON

How atrocious!

MRS. MALCOLM

Oh, I don't mean morally, altogether. I mean he mustn't be able to feel sure

that he knows what she'll say about anything, much less what she thinks of it. A music box with one tune is less monotonous than many women. Did you ever discuss anything but parish matters and the prices of things with your wife?

PARSON (*stiffly*)

My wife is not a subject for discussion with strangers.

MRS. MALCOLM

What does it matter when we shall so soon be dead? Let's speak the truth for once, unless that is asking too much of one in your profession. Do you really want to meet her in Heaven? Haven't you met other women with whom you would far rather spend eternity?

PARSON

In Heaven, we are told, there will be no marriage.

MRS. MALCOLM

That's something to be thankful for, if one ever gets there! By the bye, oughtn't you to be giving spiritual assistance to the rest of the company instead of listening to the chatter of an impenitent Magdalen?

PARSON

I wish you would let me give you some spiritual assistance. You are worth far more than you know. Whatever you are, whatever you may have been, I shall be proud to meet death by your side.

MRS. MALCOLM (*after a pause*)

Do you mean that, you single-minded little saint? Well, I've been pretty bad, I suppose, but one has some feelings of decency left. Anyhow, here we are, you a saint and I a sinner, both at the door of an eternity—of what? Neither of us is afraid; you because you believe so much, I because I believe so little. What does it all amount to? Those two over there, will they meet again? And in another existence will the distinction between the gentleman and the maid be swept away? I can't imagine what her

naked soul can be like! In this life she has been so draped with propriety. You should hear my maid take her off!

PARSON

Mrs. Malcolm! Can you not at least try to admit some serious thought of the future before you are called upon to die?

MRS. MALCOLM

What's the use? You said yourself that if you were not prepared now, a few extra prayers wouldn't make any difference.

PARSON

What I said was open to misapprehension. What I meant was that, as I have tried almost all my life to live in accordance with my faith and in communion with my Maker, I believe He will show me mercy in spite of my many failures and weaknesses, and therefore I am not afraid—He knows I've tried. But you who have cut yourself off entirely—dare you face death without one plea for pardon?

MRS. MALCOLM

No! Don't! You may make me feel afraid! Leave me my one poor little rag of a virtue to cover me—the virtue of physical courage!

(The waves are breaking heavily now against the ship and she trembles under their blows. Presently a shower of spray drives back the two by the rail, and they move up the deck. GASCOIGNE and HARRISON get up and join them. The latter still looks radiant; GASCOIGNE looks serious, but he keeps his arm round her with great tenderness.)

The groups further down the deck suddenly converge and talk excitedly. An officer emerges from the crowd.)

OFFICER

We have at last got an answer. The *Magellan* is coming to our help. She will reach us in about two hours, that is to say before high tide, and we may last till then. Even if we don't, we can keep afloat with lifebelts for an hour or so. As it's getting rougher, you'd better put them on at once.

(He goes off.)

MRS. MALCOLM

An anti-climax! And now—
(HARRISON *draws quickly away from*
GASCOIGNE, *burying her face in her hands.*)

SCENE II

A hotel sitting room. MRS. GASCOIGNE sits on a sofa, knitting. MRS. BASCOM, a commonplace person, dowdily dressed, is sitting with her.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I am sure you suffered horribly. It was very splendid of Mr. Bascom to remain behind.

MRS. BASCOM

I think myself that Mr. Bascom would have shown a higher sense of duty in coming with me. Considering we have five children and his life is insured only for a thousand pounds—and he had just been given a really good chaplaincy! And I should have thought at least that he would have spent what he believed to be his last moments in prayer with the rest of the passengers and the crew, instead of which he did nothing but talk to that dreadful woman who calls herself Mrs. Malcolm.

MRS. GASCOIGNE (*interested*)

Really? I wonder who told you that?

MRS. BASCOM

That nice quiet maid of yours.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Harrison! How very indiscreet of her!

MRS. BASCOM

Well—as she was there, I asked her.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I shouldn't worry about it if I were you. Mrs. Malcolm will go back to where she belongs, and your husband will neither see nor wish to see her any more.

MRS. BASCOM

I hope not, I'm sure. But I must say I am surprised at Horace. He's never had anything to reproach *me* with since we've been married.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

That's a great deal to be able to say. (MRS. BASCOM *rises.*) Must you go? When do you leave?

MRS. BASCOM

This evening at seven. I must just run in again to say good-bye. I do hope you will suffer no after effects from our dreadful experiences. You are wonderful to have borne up so well—considering the terrible anxiety you must have suffered about your son during that whole fearful day! I *can* admire his heroism in remaining behind. He—to whom life offers so much, to be willing to throw it away for the sake of some humble, unknown soul—

MRS. GASCOIGNE

It is only fair to say that my own maid did the same thing, and I dare say she finds life pleasant, too.

MRS. BASCOM

Oh, no doubt. But one must also accord admiration to the mother who could uncomplainingly leave behind a brilliant son—

MRS. GASCOIGNE

My dear woman! Do you suppose I'd ever have set foot in that detestable boat if I'd known he wasn't coming? It was too dark to see anything, and I thought he was there till we were clear of the ship—and then I cursed everything I could think of in Heaven and earth! And when that dirty old tramp picked us up I cursed still more. Do you suppose I wanted to be saved then? What value could life possibly hold for me without him?

MRS. BASCOM

Quite true. So worthy a son! Has he told you how he spent those dreadful hours?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

No. He has not—and there are some questions one does not ask.

MRS. BASCOM

True. But surely you should like to know. Horace told me he was most of the time talking to your maid. So noble

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of him! I suppose he was trying to comfort her, poor thing!

(Enter GASCOIGNE, carrying a cardboard box. He looks worried.)

GASCOIGNE

Good morning, Mrs. Bascom. I've brought you some flowers, mother.

MRS. BASCOM

Good morning. Your mother and I were just rejoicing together over our restored dear ones! I was just telling her what Horace told me of your kindness to her maid during those dreadful hours of suspense! (GASCOIGNE glares at her for a moment with suspicion.) Now I must really go.

(She kisses MRS. GASCOIGNE and goes out.)

MRS. GASCOIGNE

She says that her husband has never had anything to reproach her with! H'm! Only with the daily and hourly infliction of an intolerable weight! Only with incessant nagging and persistently ungenerous criticism! Circumstances sometimes reveal character like a flash-light photograph. I saw into that woman's very soul last night! Let's hope domestic martyrdom may be counted unto us as the highest form of righteousness. She's annoyed because the poor little man spent his time while awaiting his death in unseemly converse with Mrs. Malcolm.

GASCOIGNE

It was hardly unseemly—at any rate on his side. Perhaps some of her remarks bordered on the profane. But she was rather fine, all things considered.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Yes. Even Harrison allows her a grudging admiration. By the way, how do you account for Harrison's own surprising display of heroism? I really think she reached the climax of bravery when she put on your coat and hat; it showed far more courage in her than risking her life. She must have been so horribly shocked at herself!

(GASCOIGNE flushes deeply and leans

forward, clasping his hands and bending his head.)

GASCOIGNE

Mother! I've got to tell you something.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I thought as much. What is it?

GASCOIGNE

About her—Harrison. You see, when we thought it was the end of all things, we—well, I suppose we rather lost our heads and—well, you can imagine how it was!

MRS. GASCOIGNE (after a pause)

I suppose I can. What then?

GASCOIGNE

I am going to ask her to marry me.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Oh! Do you think that is really necessary?

GASCOIGNE

Yes. You see, she owned what she would never have owned in ordinary circumstances and, knowing what I do, I can't possibly act otherwise.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

So that was why she stayed behind! (With a short laugh) For love's dear sake!

GASCOIGNE (gravely)

Yes. Hardly a thing to sneer at, do you think?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

No, it isn't. It was just as sublime as if she were—well, anyone but one's maid! Only, I wish to Heaven she hadn't done it! I admire her immensely—but I hate her most heartily. Oh, Monty! Must you?

GASCOIGNE

Of course I must. She isn't an ordinary, silly sort of romantic girl. I didn't know she ever looked in my direction. You needn't imagine there had ever been anything of the sort.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

My dear boy, did I even bother to ask you that? I know you—and Harrison.

At least, I thought I knew Harrison, but I'm not so sure that I do!

GASCOIGNE

You don't. How should you when you have only seen her in the character of your maid—a creature who must necessarily repress almost every feeling, a mere minister to other people's comfort?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Yes, but she always seemed so entirely immersed in the spirit of service—I can't conceive her in any other medium.

GASCOIGNE

Well, you see, I can. Please don't imagine I am sacrificing myself in marrying her. She's worlds too good for me in point of real worth. She has far more in her than half the women one meets in society.

MRS. GASCOIGNE (*looking at him with an air of wistful amusement*)

Certainly. I'm sure she has. I dare say she is capable of making you very happy, if you are really fond of her. Of course you'll have to give up diplomacy—she wouldn't suit that life at all—but you can afford to live very comfortably without a profession. If you buy a place in the country in a neighborhood where nobody knows much about you, I feel sure she'd go very well. Considering what sort of people one has to put up with in society nowadays, there would be very little to object to in her. She's got sense enough to hold her tongue when necessary, and that's the great thing, after all. She'd make very few blunders. She's well educated, even well read, much better than many women I know. Of course my friends will pity me, and I shan't like that; but if you make her your wife I promise you I will treat her decently. You'll get a very good wife and I shall lose an admirable maid. By the way, are you in love with her?

GASCOIGNE

How could I help it? When she came to me like that, willing to stand by me to the last—

MRS. GASCOIGNE

I fancy you can help it, all the same. You are only following your sense of duty! Oh, Monty, must you? It isn't as if there would be any disgrace attaching to her—it was all so innocent—

GASCOIGNE (*kneeling down beside her*)

Don't you see that that is her strongest claim upon me—that she really has no claim? She made me a present of her love when she thought she could get nothing in return for it—and I can't give it back to her now and say I don't want it! The other sort of claim may be met in different ways perhaps, but in this case I see only one way.

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Oh, yes. You'll do the right thing and suffer for it, but it can't be helped—and I've got to look on. Have you spoken to her yet—since, I mean?

GASCOIGNE

No. I never saw her on board the *Magellan*—I think she was avoiding me. I want to see her as soon as possible, and I want to see her first alone—not with you—you understand?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

Yes. You go away. I'll send for her and give her something to do in here. Then you come back.

GASCOIGNE

You won't say anything to her—about me?

MRS. GASCOIGNE

No. I won't. I might, but I won't. It wouldn't be fair play. I admit she has earned a right to you, and I won't interfere.

GASCOIGNE

I say, mother, what is her Christian name?

MRS. GASCOIGNE (*laughing grimly*)

You could hardly address her as "dearest Harrison"! Her name is Ada. Now ring the bell. (*He does so, then goes out.*) Poor Monty! Here endeth what ought to have been a brilliant career—

THE SMART SET

not to mention the hopes and happiness of a sinful old woman. If only there were a ghost of a chance of her refusing him! (HARRISON enters.) I'm going to my room till lunch time, Harrison. Just arrange those flowers Mr. Gascoigne brought, in water, will you? There are some vases on the mantelpiece. Hideous, but they must do. Come and call me at one o'clock. If Mr. Gascoigne comes in, tell him not to disturb me.

HARRISON

Yes, ma'am. *(She takes the flowers out of the box and proceeds to arrange them. GASCOIGNE enters.)* Mrs. Gascoigne is lying down, sir; she does not wish to be disturbed.

(GASCOIGNE looks very white and almost pitifully nervous. As she speaks he stops short and looks at her in blank amazement.)

GASCOIGNE *(with obvious effort)*
Ada!

HARRISON *(flushing deeply)*
Please don't, sir!

GASCOIGNE *(advancing and getting his voice into better control)*

You are not to call me "sir"—after that night.

HARRISON *(turning and facing him)*
That night is gone, sir.

GASCOIGNE *(still artificially, but trying to sound sincere)*
But not the memory of it.

HARRISON
I hoped it had, sir.

GASCOIGNE
Why?

HARRISON
One wishes to forget what it is a disgrace to remember.

GASCOIGNE
A disgrace!

HARRISON

On my part, sir. You have no cause to reproach yourself. I am quite aware of that.

GASCOIGNE *(in his natural voice)*

My dear girl! What do you mean by disgrace? You have every right to be proud of what you did.

HARRISON

I think of it very differently, sir. I'm sure I've never given myself cause to be ashamed before, but when I think of what I said—and did—I'm sure I'd much rather have drowned. I only hoped I'd never see you again!

(She is on the verge of tears. He, genuinely touched, goes toward her with outstretched hands, but she moves quickly away to the other side of the table.)

GASCOIGNE

Don't be absurd, my dear girl! Look here, I can't say what I want to across this table! Do come and sit down!

HARRISON

No, thank you, sir. If we talk in here we may disturb Mrs. Gascoigne. She will wonder why you should be talking to me.

GASCOIGNE

I don't think so. *(He again advances and she again retreats round the table.)* Well, then, I must say what I want to say from here. I want to ask you if you will do me the honor of becoming my wife.

HARRISON

No, thank you, sir.

GASCOIGNE

Why not? Didn't you mean what you said?

HARRISON

I meant it then, sir.

GASCOIGNE

Then why not now? What have I done since to make you change your mind?

HARRISON

Nothing, sir. I have not changed my mind; I was not myself that night. I

was the same as if I was dead—but I have come to life again now and it is all different. I'm Mrs. Gascoigne's maid and you are her son.

GASCOIGNE

What does that matter—if we care for each other?

HARRISON

All that belonged to that early morning, sir, not to the world we live in. I am very sorry, sir, that I behaved as I did; it was most unbecoming. You have behaved like a perfect gentleman, sir, and I am very grateful to you. Now, if you please, I should like to go to my room.

GASCOIGNE

But look here—my mother?

HARRISON

Why should she know anything about it, sir? If I continue to give satisfaction—

GASCOIGNE

But she does know! I felt I must tell her!

HARRISON (*horried*)

You told her! Oh, sir, that was a cruel thing to do! How can I ever look her in the face again?

(*She begins to sob into her pocket handkerchief.*)

GASCOIGNE

She is quite willing to give her consent and receive you as her daughter.

HARRISON (*with an air of astonishment*)

I cannot understand that at all, sir—Mrs. Gascoigne consenting to such a thing! (*She appears genuinely shocked.*)

Why, sir, I would rather she had not even known I took the liberty of putting on your coat and cap; I felt sure she would not like it, but at the time I did not care. But if she knows, of course I must find another situation.

GASCOIGNE

You could hardly have stayed on, could you, even if she had not known?

HARRISON

Why not, sir? You need never have feared any annoyance. I am very much attached to Mrs. Gascoigne and I know all her ways; it will take her a long while to get used to a new maid. I don't know what she must think of me!

GASCOIGNE

You had better take another situation—as my wife.

HARRISON

No, thank you, sir. I had rather be respected in my own class than despised in yours. I don't feel as if I could ever face Mrs. Gascoigne again, but she can't get on without me here, so if I tell her I wish to leave as soon as convenient, I hope she will understand my feelings.

(*Sniffing tearfully, she goes out of the room.*)

GASCOIGNE (*gazing at the closed door*)

Well—I'm—damned! She's more lady's maid than woman, after all. I believe she'll stay now if mother will let her. And—why not? Why should she lose a good maid? She's left off being a woman. I think I'll go and see mother. I fancy she won't mind being disturbed!

CURTAIN



OLD flames are hard to extinguish.



THERE are folks who are always cool and collected—in the cemeteries.

HIS WIFE AND HER HUSBAND

By René Pascal

THERE was much speculation after the marriage of Lois Van Orley and Gerard Ruysdael. People said that she was too young for him and would seek younger company, and he would have his usual number of affairs, undisturbed by the newly acquired yoke of matrimony. But despite all these unwelcome predictions they were to all appearances a very happy couple.

At four o'clock the telephone rang in Ruysdael's office and he turned to answer it angrily. Then his mood changed.

"This is Gerard." . . . "Yes. Tonight. Rector's." . . . "But, Mona, Lois will never suspect." . . . "Your letter? Yes, I have—" He felt in his pocket—then gave a start. "Good Lord! I left it on the telephone stand at home!" . . . "If Lois ever sees it! There will be no end of trouble." . . . "Yes, yes! I'll go now!" He hastily shut his desk, gave a few orders to his stenographer and left.

Mrs. Ruysdael stopped to chat with Mrs. Campbell before going home. They had been roommates at boarding school, and therefore a certain degree of confidence existed between them.

"My dear," said Mrs. Campbell in the course of their conversation, "does your husband know anything about your affair with young Francis Memling?"

"No, Caroline, he doesn't, and I know he would make a scene if he found out. I am very fond of Gerard, as a dutiful wife—but there it stops. As a widow, you are free to see Carl as much as you wish—but I must use discretion. I received a note from Francis this morning—" She paused a moment and then gasped. "Caroline! I left it on the stand near the 'phone!"

The silence was painful. Then Caroline spoke.

"Well, don't stand here! Go get it out of the way before your husband comes home from the office."

"Good-bye." And Lois fled out without stopping to kiss her friend good-bye.

They met on the corner near the house and walked home together. The maid admitted them. They removed their wraps and stood waiting. Then the telephone rang. Like children they raced to answer it.

In the dim light of the hall, Mrs. Ruysdael grasped her letter and then took up the receiver. Ruysdael picked something up from the floor.

"Hello!" she gasped in a relieved tone. . . . "Yes." . . . "Everything satisfactory, Caroline." . . . "Yes. Good-bye."

"Dear old boy!" she murmured, feeling the note in her corsage as Gerard pressed her in his arms. "I love you!"

"You're the sweetest girl in the world," he avowed, as he heard the reassuring crackle of paper from his inside pocket. Then he kissed her.

Downstairs the maid wondered when the bubble would burst. In her agitation and fear of being discovered, she had mixed the notes.

LE PARDON

Par Charles Val

VERNEUIL ouvrit, d'une main tremblante, la lettre dont il reconnaissait la grande écriture, aristocratiquement allongée, et il lut :

"Mon pauvre ami,

"Un mois s'est écoulé depuis que vous m'avez quittée. Ce mois, je l'ai passé dans des alternatives de colère, de haine, de désespoir, de tristesse. Bien des fois, j'eus de la peine à repousser l'ardent désir qui me prenait de me venger de vous. On n'a pas été mêlée, pendant des années, à la vie d'un homme sans connaître des secrets dont la divulgation empoisonnerait son existence. Vous me connaissez; je suis nerveuse, impulsive, et j'en arrivais à me démontrer à moi-même, par une logique égoïste, que j'avais le devoir de vous vitrioler, de vous tuer, de me venger.

"De me venger de quoi? ah! voilà.

"Quel singulier sentiment que cet amour, prêt à tous les dévouements, à tous les abandons et qui se change en haine aveugle, qui devient avide des pires représailles aussitôt que l'objet qui l'a fait naître n'accepte plus ses sacrifices!

"J'ai réfléchi. La solitude, le recueillement et la méditation m'ont conseillée autrement que la colère. J'ai compris que vous n'étiez pas le maître de vos instincts; que le temps fait son œuvre malgré nous et dégrade petit à petit les monuments les plus solidement édifiés, qu'on croyait éternels. Et je vous sus gré d'avoir tranché dans le vif; de m'avoir laissée, d'avoir trahi vos devoirs, failli à vos promesses et de ne m'avoir pas forcée à me détacher de vous, selon la coutume en pareil cas, par mille piqures voulues, hypocrites.

"Le raisonnement a tempéré la véhémence

de mes griefs; la raison a pansé ma blessure.

"Certes, vous m'aviez bien abusée. Je croyais à tout: à vos prières, à vos protestations, à vos serments. Je me croyais indispensable à votre vie, quand vous m'appeliez votre fiancée. Un regard tendre de vous m'emplissait de bonheur; une pression affectueuse de votre main me donnait un frisson qui faisait se clore mes yeux.

"Je prononçais ce nom tout bas, constamment, comme une prière.

"Partout où cet être n'était pas, il me semblait que l'air fût raréfié et j'éprouvais du malaise. Tout ce qui le touchait ou le concernait me ravissait, me dilatait, m'exaltait, me bouleversait.

"Une fleur offerte par lui avait plus de prix pour moi que tous les trésors du monde. Je subissais sa domination; je me courbais sous sa volonté avec ivresse, et mon bonheur était intense.

"Un regard de douceur venant de lui me mettait l'âme en épanouissement; ses colères étaient une affirmation de force et d'individualité.

"Certes, quand on sort de l'enchantement et du ravissement où j'étais; quand il semble que toutes les étoiles du ciel tombent; que toutes les fleurs des parterres se fanent; que tous les parfums qui grisaient s'envolent; quand on était dans l'impossible, dans la féerie, dans la légende, dans l'inouï, et qu'on retombe sur la terre, toute seule, il semble qu'on ne pourra pas vivre une heure de plus. On est une étrangère dépaycée dans un monde inconnu où elle trouve d'autres habitudes, d'autres mœurs. On est abasourdie; on est déçue, mais peu à peu la fièvre de désolation tombe; on aperçoit un petit coin du ciel bleu au-dessus de l'abîme.

"J'ai laissé passer la grande crise de souffrance aiguë, mon ami, avant de revenir à vous.

"Nous nous sommes sincèrement aimés. Vous aimiez comme j'aimais alors que, dans notre voyage dans l'Inde avec mon père, j'ai demandé au fakir qui nous faisait visiter sa pagode le poison terrible qui me tuerait sur le champ, si la mort vous arrachait à ma tendresse. Je ne redoutais que la mort, en ce temps-là, je la croyais la seule ennemie de mon bonheur; il me semblait que je ne pourrais pas vous survivre. Et tous deux nous aurions préféré la mort à la possibilité de n'être pas heureux ensemble.

Vous souvenez-vous avec quel air de condescendance ironique le fakir me dit: "Je vous donne sans crainte ce que vous demandez; le poison ne sera pas pour vous. Une femme, quand elle perd l'objet de son amour, a une crise de nerfs; elle se fait faire une belle robe noire qui sied à son teint de blonde et elle pense que le jeune homme qui tenait le cordon du poêle à l'enterrement du bien-aimé avait bonne façon et l'allure distinguée."

"Ce n'est pas la mort qui nous a séparés, ce fut beaucoup moins. Quoique j'eusse été souvent tentée de prendre, dans le chaton de ma bague, le poison dont une parcelle sur ma langue eût mis fin à mes maux, j'ai jeté la bague, et j'allais brûler vos lettres pour effacer toutes les traces du passé, mais je préfère vous les renvoyer. Rassurez-vous, je vous crois galant homme et je ne vous réclame pas les miennes; faites-en un feu de joie et frottez-vous les mains en les regardant brûler.

"Je ne vous fais pas de reproches. Je laisse à votre conscience le soin de qualifier votre façon d'agir. Je ne vous blâme pas, mais je vous réclame seulement ma petite photographie d'enfant, que je vous ai donnée et qui me vient de ma mère.

"Ne m'écrivez pas; ne mentez pas; n'essayez pas de vous justifier. Pour vous éviter une peine, comme pour ne plus revoir une écriture qui me causait tant d'émotion, je vous joins une enveloppe à mon adresse, timbrée; vous n'aurez qu'à y glisser la photographie.

"Tout est fini. Je vous ai bien aimé

ou plutôt j'ai bien aimé celui qui vous ressemblait et qui n'est plus. Ainsi va la vie. Je vous pardonne, soyez heureux. Adieu.
SIMONE."

Verneuil relut cette lettre; elle lui avait apporté une déception; il s'était attendu à des injures, à des malveillances, à des supplications. Simone avait pris facilement son parti de son abandon. Elle ne manifestait pas même un regret.

Une sourde colère monta. Cette lettre niaise et pondérée était la démonstration qu'on ne l'avait point aimé. Quand il avait hésité à sacrifier son indépendance et rompu, il pensait que, pour Simone, la vie sentimentale était terminée; qu'elle languirait et s'enfermerait dans un désespoir solitaire.

Verneuil, furieusement, déchira en vingt morceaux la lettre qu'il venait de recevoir et la jeta dans sa corbeille à papiers. Puis il se calma, ramassa les morceaux, les réajusta, les recolla avec du papier gommé, relut la lettre, et, définitivement, la jeta au feu.

Puis il traça une réponse ironique fielleuse et narquoise qu'il jeta également dans la cheminée.

"Je suis bête, pensa-t-il, elle ne parlerait pas des moindres détails du passé, si elle l'avait oublié; et elle l'aurait oublié si elle ne m'aimait plus.

"Sa lettre cache un piège; les femmes sont perfides; renvoyons-lui tout simplement, pour la confondre, ce qu'elle réclame."

Verneuil chercha dans ses tiroirs la photographie de la petite fille que Simone avait été, la glissa dans l'enveloppe préparée, qu'il cacheta.

Aussitôt, il eut une sensation de brûlure sur la langue et un éblouissement; ses jambes fléchirent, sa vue s'obscurcit. Il voulut appeler et n'eut pas la force d'atteindre, de la main, le bouton électrique.

Quand le valet de chambre entra dans le cabinet de Verneuil, il trouva son maître étendu sur le tapis, les yeux hors de l'orbite, la face noire, la langue pendante et tuméfiée.

Les médecins qui constatèrent le décès conclurent à un empoisonnement, sans parvenir à en déterminer la cause.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS

By George Jean Nathan

SHAKESPEARE, whatever his truly multifarious virtues, was at bottom one of those provoking nuisances—an optimist. His optimism is unequivocally reflected in almost all his writings; with particular sunniness, however, in his tragedies. From "Othello," which he ends happily by comfortably blotting out the lives of his wedded protagonists instead of giving to the drama the inevitably tragic and more terribly natural ending of the Moor living out the rest of his days in lingering, brain-searing, heart-gutting, tormenting suspicion,* to "Hamlet," which he gives a pleasant termination in the death of Hamlet instead of the more relentlessly logical ending of the miserable man living out his poisoned life on earth, the appalling uplift spirit of the dramatist is unmistakably apparent.

Take another of his dramas—"Julius Cæsar." What clearer proof of Shakespeare's omnipresent optimism, of his trans-Maeterlinckianism, than here? Where Shaw, in his "Cæsar and Cleopatra," proves for the hundredth time that he is a discriminating pessimist and a sincere observer by having deliberately selected for his drama that most miserable portion of Cæsar's life, when the now bald-headed and stringy old Julius was brought face to face with the realest of all men's tragedies, the futile, dried-up passion of an old man for a pink young girl, Shakespeare, the optimist ever, dramatically overlooks the acuter travails in the soldier-statesman's career and benignly makes him a theatrical hero by the simple and perfectly patent "sympathy" trick of killing him at the

hated hands of no less than *eight* villains in the very first scene of the third act of a five-act play.

Of course all this is not at all remarkable when we consider that the authors of the world's greatest tragic dramas have, with possibly but a single exception, been indomitable optimists. Just as our greatest writers of farce and comedy have ever been thorough pessimists! Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, who have been designated respectively as the Phidias, the Polycletus and the Lysippus of Tragedy, were each and all unconscionable whitewashers, not only in their professional but also in their personal attitudes. It is recorded of Æschylus, an eye witness of Grecian triumph in the overthrow and annihilation of the Persian forces under Darius and Xerxes, that his great personal bravery in the battles of Marathon and Salamis was due to an absolute belief that death was the happiest adventure in mortal's life. For his poorly concealed subterfuge in the indirect but pompous proclamation of his own valor, one need only look into his "Persians" and "Seven Against Thebes."

Sophocles was an optimist from birth. Of rich parents, extremely handsome and magnetic to the ladies, an athlete and a musician, an inordinate lover of life and life's good times, a mixer of an almost Elk proficiency and a popular all-around man, the presence of this cerise quality in the fellow was to be expected. It has been observed that, to speak in the spirit of the ancient religion, it was as if a beneficent Providence had crowned Sophocles with every imaginable blessing of this earth, for he proceeded with increasing success in his career till he had

*Sense thus the tragedy of such comedies as "Rebellious Susan" (Henry Arthur Jones) and "The Fairy Tale" (Schnitzler).

passed his ninetieth year, some of his greatest works, indeed, being the fruit of an even later period. Sophocles, the tragic writer of imperial wallop, was the biggest born optimist of his period.

And Euripides! As Plato indicates, here an optimist to the point of effeminacy, an altruist *aux fines herbes*. The tragic writings of the man, as Winkelmann has pointed out, proceed to a degree of oleomargarine where he lays on, even to overloading, those merely corporeal charms characterized as a "flattery of the gross external senses," whatever is persuasive and pleasantly striking—in a word, whatever produces a happy impression regardless of intrinsic soundness.

All optimists are, naturally, exaggerators. The optimism of Euripides may thus be appreciated with doubled intensity upon an investigation into his attitudes toward such of his characters as his exaggerated moaning old men, his exaggerated suffering heroes made paupers. Euripides, in fact, was so optimistic that he could not help being perfectly aware of the somewhat jocose extent to which his optimism carried him; and as a result he was probably the original sleeve-laughter, the *stammvater* of the tongue-in-the-cheek academy.

August Wilhelm Schlegel, in his lectures on dramatic art and literature in the spring of 1808, in Vienna, said:

"He (Euripides) thought (or pretended to think) it too vulgar a thing to believe in the gods after the simple manner of the people, and he therefore seized every opportunity of interspersing something of the allegorical interpretation of them, and gave his spectators to suspect that the sincerity of his own belief was very problematical. . . . He applied to the heroic life and the heroic ages maxims which could only apply to the social relations of his own times. He threw out a multitude of moral apophthegms, not seldom fundamentally false. With all his parade of morality, the aim of his pieces and the general impression which they were calculated to produce was sometimes extremely immoral."

Here the primordial G. B. S.—with this one difference: the Greek laughed in

his sleeve at himself; the Irishman laughs in his sleeve at the public. Inasmuch as the public is ever an optimistic body, it is given only to a pessimist *consciously and consistently* to hoax it with success. What better further evidence of the preposterously creamy mental posture of this Euripides than his sweetening of "Electra," with Ægisthus' exhibition of honeyed hospitality, Clytemnestra's "mother love," etc., especially when this treatment is compared with that of his two predecessors? Among the later writers of ancient tragedy, Agathon was so full of goosefat for humanity and the cosmos generally that Aristophanes was impelled to describe his mind as being "fragrant with ointment and crowned with flowers." And Lycophron, with whose tragedy "Alexandra" my readers are familiar, was such an unmitigated optimist that he was known even among his colleagues as "he whose eyes see gold in the yellow clay."

These "lovers of their fellow men," these impresarios of the sweetened salves of faith, have ever been our leaders in the creation of tragedy. Passing over the chasm of time to the Italian tragedy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we discover (via Hyginus, Voltaire and the "Dramaturgie" of Lessing) that its celebrated chef, Maffei with his "Merope," was an optimist *de luxe* directly out of Euripides. In the musical Metastasio—"his heroes, like those of Corneille, ever gallant; his heroines, like those of Racine, ever tender"—and in Alfieri, with his "Orestiad," with its crudely hidden optimism derived from the Greeks, we encounter biographical vaseline in robust doses.

On to France and her sixteenth and seventeenth century writers of tragedy—Corneille, Racine, Voltaire! Could anyone but an optimist have written the volitional, trusting heroes of Corneille? Could anyone but an optimist have displayed the "sugared gallantry," the later personal piety, the pew worship of romantic love as Racine displayed these? Would Madame de Maintenon have had to exercise her person so laboriously against a pessimist? Hardly.

The name of Voltaire you may cast against the strong walls of the argument I am here building. Ha, you exclaim, *he* was no haberdasher of honey, no peach *compote*, no professional or personal merchant of molasses! Well, maybe he shall be our one exception, although, had I the space or inclination, I might summon forth in behalf of my contention such doubts over the authenticity of much of Voltaire's "pessimism" as are to be located in his petition to the queen when he was threatened with a burlesque of his "Semiramis," in the observation of the illustrious founder of the modern romantic school of German literature that "from the variety of subjects on which Voltaire's mind was constantly employed, it was impossible for him to avoid shallowness and immaturity of ideas (and their daughter, cynicism)," in the blind influence upon him of the optimistic Greek tragedy, *u. s. w.*

And so, through these optimistic fellows who have turned out the prime tragicomic moans of dramatic history, we come to the Germans, Elias Schlegel, Cronegk and Weisse, all dyed-in-the-wool followers of the French plum jam school. And from these, to Goethe, whose idealizing soul music sings from out "Iphigenia" and "Egmont," and to Schiller and the rioting sentimentality of his "Cabale und Liebe," the impressions of earnest piety in his "Maria Stuart" and the inevitable coming to the surface of the syrups of romance in his tragedy "The Bride of Messina," the rose colorings of his "Maid of Orleans." And so back again to the sachem of tragedy and the sheik of altruistic musk and sachet, Shakespeare. Here at once rooster of tragedy and chief cock of the metaphysical doctrine of Leibnitz that the existing universe is the best of all possible universes; he whom Milton called "our sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child"; he who was so optimistic that he actually put money into the theatrical business; and he who, having put it in, was still so persistently the ingrained optimist that he could soberly ruminate "all's well that ends well," when, as any sensible even half-pessimist who has

ever had anything to do with the theater knows, all's well that ends at all. The best thing, for instance, about one of Henri Bernstein's tediously prolonged dramas is the circumstance of its being eventually over with. The best thing about such a theatrical season-as we have just passed through is the fact of its having at last come to an end. The trouble with most things theatrical is not that they do not end well, but that they do not end at all!

However, inasmuch as it would seem that this melancholy theatrical season of 1913-14 has finally had the courtesy to stop, it becomes my duty, as per annual custom, to chronicle what were, to this mind, comparatively the ten best new plays, together with the ten best performances on the part of the "unstarred" and "unfeatured" actors and actresses, revealed in the so-called "regular" show shops of New York. Inasmuch as this is a magazine for English speaking readers, and inasmuch as it therefore would not be well for me to write the rest of this review in German (as I should have to do), I must necessarily exclude the plays and the performances of the Irving Place Theater. The exception of the enterprises of this theater is, in addition, a noble charity on my part, *i. e.*, to the theaters and mummers of Broadway.

Exclusive of what may be analyzed satisfactorily as frank farce, and failing to discover a play of sufficient merit to occupy the tenth position, I submit an idea of the relative worth of the nine best new full-length dramatic presentations of the theatrical year recently closed:

1. General John Regan (Birmingham)
2. Where Ignorance Is Bliss (Molnar)
3. The Legend of Leonora (Barrie)
4. Change (Francis)
5. The Great Adventure (Bennett)
6. The Younger Generation (Houghton)
7. The Marriage Game (Flexner)
8. Too Many Cooks (Craven)
9. A Thousand Years Ago (Mackaye)
10. ————— (—)

"Seven Keys to Baldpate," by Cohan out of Biggers, flashes forth sharply as the season's best farce, with "The Misleading Lady" in second position.

Of the performances of the season's

unstarred and unfeatured actors, the following ten, in the order named, appear to me to be deserving of the awards:

1. Arnold Daly (in "General John Regan")
2. Frank Reicher (in "The Secret")
3. R. A. Hopkins (in "Change")
4. Lennox Pawle (in "Beauty and the Barge" and "Grumpy")
5. Aubrey Smith (in "The Legend of Leonora")
6. Pedro de Cordoba (in "Othello"—Faversham edition)
7. Stanley Drewitt (in "The Younger Generation")
8. Edwin Arden (in "Today")
9. W. G. Pay (in "General John Regan")
10. Sydney Booth (in "The Truth")

I have selected these performances from a catalogue including the names of Fuller Mellish in "Twelfth Night" (Anglin edition), George Probert in "The Lure," George Hassell in "Her Own Money" and "Rachel," James Marcus in "The Escape," Grendon Bentley in "The Merchant of Venice" (Robertson edition), Frank Lacy in "Cæsar and Cleopatra," Guy Standing in "At Bay," Orrin Johnson in "The Marriage Game," Harry Harwood in "Regan," Frank Sylvester and Lewis Stone in "The Misleading Lady," Ernest Truex in "The Dummy," Edward Fosberg in "Rachel," Messrs. Staveley and Besant in "The Philanderer," Arthur Lewis and Morton Selten in "Leonora" and George Nash in "Panthea." I have been assured by a proficient colleague that the performance of Eric Blind in the representation of "The Taming of the Shrew" was happily accomplished. Although I did not see the performance, I must yet refrain from expressing my critical opinion of it. By way of excuse for this, let me explain that, though a dramatic critic, I like sometimes to be unconventional.

The following, in the order specified, among the unstarred and unfeatured women performers, seem to me deserving of highest praise:

1. Rita Jolivet (in "Where Ignorance Is Bliss")
2. Emily Stevens (in "Today")
3. Florence Reed (in "The Yellow Ticket" and "The Girl and the Pennant")
4. Grace Elliston (in "Ourselves")
5. Florine Arnold (in "The Things That Count")

6. Martha Hedman (in "Indian Summer")
7. Jennie Moscovitz (in "The Auctioneer")
8. Alice Brady (in "The Things That Count" and "The Family Cupboard")
9. Ruth Holt Boucicault (in "Twelfth Night")
10. Julia Dean (in "Her Own Money")

These I have selected from a list finally reduced to the performances of Mary Boland in "The Will," Adeline Bourne and Maude Buchanan in "The Light That Failed," Marie Wainwright in "Today," Haidee Wright in "Tante," Allison Skipworth in "The Marriage Game," Lillian Kingsbury in "The Land of Promise," Margaret Nybloc in "Kitty MacKay," Elita Proctor Otis in "The House of Bondage," Irene Fenwick in "Along Came Ruth," and little Miss Vivian Tobin in "The Rule of Three."

In justification of my selections of the season's most noteworthy plays—note-worthy, that is, in comparison with the other presentations—I believe I need indulge in small argument. The pieces I have named seem to me, from the soundest critical standpoint, to be far in the van of their fellows. With the possible exception of Mr. Mackaye's "Thousand Years Ago," against the inclusion of which in the list there might be lifted a valid voice (I myself know seven or eight good arguments against its presence in the catalogue—however, I can analyze no other piece of the season into the ninth position), the plays selected stand forth from the ranks in the matter of wit, scrivening grace, comparative thematic ingenuity and fertility, philosophical air, dramatic and literary meat and general interest. My intimate reviews of the plays in these pages during the season precludes the necessity for a much further investigation here into their merits.

Inasmuch as the mind of the public regularly regards as the best plays those plays which enjoy the largest financial success, I duly anticipate, as is the annual occurrence at this time, the receipt of innumerable letters of protest against the validity of my choices. From Wilmington, Delaware, I shall receive the usual four letters assuring me that "Where Ignorance Is Bliss" certainly

cannot be so good a play as "Potash and Perlmutter," for instance, because "Where Ignorance Is Bliss" ran only a week and was then despatched to the storehouse, while "Potash and Perlmutter" has been running all season. From Springfield, Illinois, a half-dozen letters will prove to me that "Change," which was a dead failure, cannot possibly be nearly so commendable a play, on the very face of things, as "Today," which was one of the longest-run achievers of the year. And from Salt Lake City I shall get the usual three letters telling me that I assuredly cannot know what I am talking about when I include "The Great Adventure" (a failure) in the list and omit "A Temperamental Journey" (a success), particularly as both these plays had the same theme. Of course these letters will make me feel very sad and properly ashamed of myself.

Incidentally—this is quite irrelevant—I wonder how many persons who disputed at fine length over the derivation of the basic idea of "The Great Adventure" and "A Temperamental Journey" and over the prior right to its theatrical use, with allusions to Tolstoi's "Living Corpse," "Pour Vivre Heureux," Bennett's own novel "Buried Alive" and so on, have ever encountered the so-called "Lustiges Trauerspiel," or merry tragedy, "Der Grosse Tote," by the Scandinavian playwrights, Magnussen and Sarauw, to be obtained in manuscript form from the Berlin publishing house of Osterheld and Company? Originally presented quite a number of years ago at the Deutsches Volkstheater, in Vienna, the theme of this play (a theme, by the way, used even before this occasion by Felix Dörmann in a musical comedy libretto) has to do with a poet of mediocre talents who, unable to find recognition, disappears and is presently declared to be dead. Soon his works are eulogized as those of a great genius, his house is converted into a museum, and a movement gets under way to honor him and his memory with a statue. In the midst of the excitement the poet turns up again, but, instead of announcing himself, decides to

rest content with his posthumous fame and the consequent large income from his works.

To revert momentarily to the oft-spanked question of the public's monogamous taste in drama and, especially, its critical confusion of the good play with the financially successful play. A matter absurdly simple of explanation. So simple, indeed, that I have, as you know, frequently employed it as a subterfuge to conceal my temporary lack of other, better and fresher critical ideas. The American public, as we all of us at this late hour know by rote, is ever on the side of wealth. In law, in politics, society and in art, the native public—particularly the poor element of it—roots consistently for the rich party. The exceptions are negligible in the running up of the general estimate. The greatest American dramatist is that dramatist who has made the most money out of his plays! The best play is the play that sells out the ticket rack for the greatest number of weeks! Art = \$ and \$ = art. Who were the leading decriers of the I. W. W. when, a couple of months ago, those poor homeless fellows sought to persuade the churches of the city to throw open their doors to them and allow them to sleep on the floors at night? The admirers of "General John Regan" and "Where Ignorance Is Bliss"? No! The admirers, rather, of "Jerry" and "Kitty MacKay"—and all those who are waiting impatiently for Charles Klein's next big success! Where, outside the small fistful of thoughtful men of the commonwealth, was there among our ninety millions of snob hybrids—poor or rich—a single separative soul brave enough to say for these poor, bedless fellow human beings that where a finer commemorative purpose for our churches, where a sweeter and a more human dream, than to offer them up by night to the homeless amongst us? The Christ to whom these great stone and steepled prayers have been erected was just such an one. HE, too, had no place to sleep. Why then, American sneerers and snarlers at the poor, consign the I. W. W. to the mangers?

But I wander. Here, no precise place for things so serious. And so I descend again to dramatic criticism.

My annual prize for the most proficient, exact and scholarly specimen of newspaper dramatic criticism I take great pleasure in awarding this season to my illustrious colleague, Mr. Towse, of the *New York Evening Post*. Thus, in part, his critique of the play "Help Wanted":

The representation is a fairly effective one of its order, but of fresh characterization, or ideas, serious purpose, or literary quality it has not a trace. Of the life which it proposes to reflect, it is the veriest travesty. In a word, it is a box office production of no earthly artistic or dramatic significance. But if there is nothing to be advanced in its favor, there is little to be said to its positive discredit. Having nothing but an old story to tell—and telling it very clumsily—it cannot do much good, but, on the other hand, there is nothing in it that can do much harm. At the bottom of all its cheap and familiar extravagances there is a residuum of truth, and it is by no means devoid of interest or matter for entertainment.

The prize for the best written critique, the finest example of pure English, goes to the author of the following excerpt. A marked similarity to the style of Joseph Conrad is apparent in this critic's pen:

The play was much too long and too obvious, even an audience which seemed to have accumulated itself with all the best and most charitable intentions wearying of the silly chatter and senseless reiterations long before the perfectly obvious finale arrived at some minutes after 11 o'clock.

The best musical play of 1913-14 was the "Sari" of Emmerich Kalman. The most sumptuous spectacle, the Hippodrome production of "Pinafore." Mr. Raymond Hitchcock remains still by all odds the one genuinely comic figure of the native music show stage.

The ten* worst plays of the season (intentional farces excluded) were:

1. The Governor's Boss.
2. The House of Bondage.
3. Jerry.
4. The Dear Fool.
5. Shadowed.
6. The Smouldering Flame.
7. Children of Today.
8. Don't Weaken.
9. Marrying Money.
10. Eliza Comes to Stay.

* Selected from a catalogue of thirty-four.

As instances of the pretty wit of the leaders among the best plays of the year, quotations from "Regan" and the Molnar play become a difficult matter because this brace of plays disclosed a consistently piquing thematic, dialogic and characterization humor from first curtain to last. Of the somewhat less regular wit of the Barrie play, the following will serve as an example. Court in session at the trial of the adored Leonora. "One moment, Captain Rattway," remarks the peppery Lord Chief Justice to Leonora's defending counsel; "the accused, I observe, has not yet returned!"

Then—

CAPTAIN RATTWAY—As Your Lordship will remember, Leonora retired with your permission, to have a cup of tea.

JUDGE GRIMDYKE (*very testily*)—Yes, yes; but that was three-quarters of an hour ago!

CAPTAIN RATTWAY (*doubtfully*)—I can send for her, my lud—but whether she will come—Your Lordship knows what Leonora is.

JUDGE GRIMDYKE—I do *not* know what she is. That is what we are here to find out. And I will not have the accused called Leonora. In absenting herself so long from the court she shows a strange misunderstanding of the gravity of her position.

CAPTAIN RATTWAY—That is one of my difficulties, my lud. Her faith in Your Lordship's common sense is so complete—

JUDGE GRIMDYKE—You must not say that. You may proceed, but I warn you she shall be in her place. The court is very dull without her.

Leonora eventually returns. Rattway is extremely nervous, fearing that Leonora will break down. "My lud," says he to the Chief Justice, "it is very terrible when she breaks down." Leonora, however, protests that she will not break down; she gives her word of honor she will not. Whereupon Rattway clears his throat and begins: "You are a widow, I think?" Instantly Leonora is in tears. Her wet eyes look reproachfully at Rattway, and every man in the court room feels his heart throbbing with sympathy for the fair creature.

"Do be more careful, sir!" Judge Grimdyke roars at Rattway.

LEONORA (*through her sobs*)—I never thought he was going to ask me that.

"Nor I," Grimdyke thunders, glowering with rage at the incautious defending counsel.

The play "Change" unfortunately lends itself not readily to such fragmen-

tary quotations from its script. It must be seen or read in its entirety if its quality be properly appreciated. To quote from the script would be unfair in view of the closely knit manner of it, the expressive silences of its text and the mute suggestion rather than the verbalization of its ideas. The quality of "The Great Adventure" is to be sensed from a sample passage at arms. Whether this Ilam Carve is or is not the great artist Ilam Carve is to be proved to the satisfaction of the assembled connoisseurs of art only if it be established that this Ilam Carve is shown to possess two certain moles known to have been present upon the person of the genuine Carve. The man is asked to remove his collar and let the connoisseurs examine him for the marks of identification.

CARVE—I'm dashed if I take my collar off!

CYRUS (*triumphant*)—Hal! I knew it.

CARVE—Why should I offer my skin to the inspection of two individuals in whom I haven't the slightest interest? They've quarreled about me, but is that a reason why I should undress myself? Let me say again, I've no desire whatever to prove that I am Ilam Carve.

ALCAR—But surely to oblige us immensely, Mr. X, you will consent to give just one extra performance of an operation which, in fact, you accomplish three hundred and sixty-five times every year without any disastrous results.

CARVE—I don't look at it like that. Already my fellow citizens, expressing their conviction that I was a great artist, have buried me in Westminster Abbey—not *because* I was a great artist, but *because* I left a couple of hundred thousand pounds for a public object. And now my fellow citizens, here assembled, want me to convince them that I am a great artist by taking my collar off. I won't do it. I simply will not do it. It's too English.

Compare this with such box office "sympathy" from the sister-themed piece, "A Temperamental Journey," as the following. Dupont, the supposedly dead artist, is watching the funeral procession behind the body believed to be his.

DUPONT (*sadly*)—Bill, no matter what you thought, the past is dead. The body they carry away down there is the mortal part of the Jacques Dupont we knew, the husband of Delphine, the unknown painter whose pictures nobody wanted.

BILLY—I don't follow you—

DUPONT—Don't you? I am his heir. His sole heir. He was rich—richer than he knew, the poor bungler, and he leaves to me all his treasures—he leaves me the results of his

efforts—he leaves me the benefits of his stubborn struggle, against mediocrity, against ignorance and envy. A stroke of luck has liberated me from all the chains and shackles, and now a new life begins—a life of worthy effort, devoted to the one thing worth living for—my work!

"The Younger Generation," like "Change" and largely for the same reasons, rebels at quotation. Of the very innocent yet happy quality of "The Marriage Game," however, an idea may be gained from the following. Mrs. Oliver, the soft voiced, amiable, wordly-wise and engaging prostitute who has won the affections of the husbands of several women at once eminently moral and uninteresting, is interrogated by the wives as to the invariable success with which she has played her "game" (as they term it) against men, as to how she so consistently has contrived to win and hold them.

MRS. OLIVER—You're too good a bridge player, Mrs. Packard, not to know that you can't win *any* game except by playing it to win! Look how a man slaves over his business—he doesn't hope to succeed unless he puts his whole heart into it! Why don't you work as hard to make marriage a success? Why don't you, once you're in it, feel that you've *got* to make good? And why don't you, if you fail, feel the same humiliation that a man does at bankruptcy? After all, it's your job! And yet most women behave, when they marry, as though they'd finished a job, not begun it! They look on their husbands as cinched, and regard any effort to hold them as "most undignified." Imagine a man entering a business, feeling it beneath him to make any effort to *hold* business!

MRS. FROST (*involuntarily*)—Oh, but in business the competition is so great!

MRS. PACKARD (*cynically*)—And is there no competition in *marriage*, Emily?

MRS. OLIVER (*earnestly*)—None that a wife need fear, if she plays her game and the other woman's, too. There's a story Mrs. Disraeli used to tell with pride—even after she was Lady Beaconsfield. I wonder if you've ever heard it? When Mr. Disraeli, waiting for the election returns at the Carlton Club, in 1874, realized that he had beaten Gladstone, he walked home alone to tell his wife. Earlier in the evening the returns had been against him, and an unfavorable report had reached her. He said nothing on first seeing her. She greeted him with no trace of disappointment or regret, and escorted him in to dinner. There, at his place, was a favorite dish which the doctors had forbidden him to eat, an unusually large bunch of his favorite flowers—choice and rare wines. Other subtle and charming attentions marked the progress of the meal. After a while Disraeli rose, walked over to her and kissed her, with the words:

"You are more like a mistress than a wife!" Mrs. Disraeli thought this the highest compliment she ever received!

Mrs. Frost—I think Mr. Disraeli used *most* improper language!

Of the nature of "Too Many Cooks" I wrote in a recent issue at a length sufficient to obviate here the necessity for more amplified discussion. The spirit of the variously derived spectacle of Mr. Mackaye's "A Thousand Years Ago" (the already familiar Turandot fable) may be approached in the book of the play to be found on the public stalls.

* * * *

I have made frequent mention in these columns of Thoma's familiar comedy "MORAL," that terrapin à la Maryland, that *colette à la chasseur*, that paprika schnitz'l of modern German satires, which, since its divulging about five or six years ago, has consistently amused the theaters of Germany and Austria. The Irving Place Theater, following its production of "Pygmalion," reintroduced this peppery play to its old friends. I am bold enough to predict that our Broadway managers will hear of "MORAL" some ten years hence and, appreciating its qualities some seven or eight years after that, will duly present it in one of their theaters, say fifteen years later. Juggling airily with the materials of "Mrs. Warren's Profession," Thoma gives us the spectacle of Herr Beermann, a local Comstock, a president of the Society for the Prevention of Vice, the Jeanne d'Arc of the local anti brigade, communing with a body of guests in his home. These guests include in their number the rank and file of the local "pillars." News comes—like a bolt from the blue—that the police have just arrested the most notorious lady of the town, the presider over the temporary corporeal destinies of the local Pearls and Mabels. Someone observes that the lady has kept a diary, and Herr Beermann's immediate agitation attracts the attention of his wife. Suspicious, the latter inquires what all this has to do with her spouse. To which that worthy insouciantly replies: "Am I the president of the Anti-Vice Society, or am I not?"

The following act, laid in the headquarters of the police, witnesses an exquisite exposition of the humors incidental to "protecting the names of our prominent citizens." Then enters Ninon, the lady, hinting that unless the officials let up on her she will "tell things." Beermann, as red and nervous as a dish of currant jelly, rushes in and demands in the name of public morality that the contents of the diary be kept secret. The police, flattered at the interest taken in the case and in their handling of it by so illustrious a crusader as Beermann, assure him that the diary will be kept under cover—until the case is tried in court. Beermann lifts his voice in renewed protest. "Which is the more important," he cries: "to have morals, or to have people believe in our morals? . . . Being moral is something I can manage in my room by myself—but there is no educational value in that! The important thing is to declare one's moral convictions in public. That works beneficially on the family and on the state. It is the same with morals as with religion. One must constantly give the impression that there is such a thing, and each person must believe that the other has it. Do you think there would still be such a thing as religion if the church dealt with our sins in public? No, sir—she forgives them in silence—and the state should be shrewd enough to do the same."

The manner in which the old fraud Beermann (who has capitalized Wedekind's Marquis of Keith's knowledge that morality is the most profitable business on earth) steals the diary, the discovery that at the time Madame was pulled the most prominent personage in the land had to hide in the clothes closet, the stew the police have caused by mixing up in the affair and the way Madame is finally given the money by Beermann himself to get out of town, the whole being garnished with delicious wit, go to fill out the tonic evening. Here a world satire. And one of a dozen admirable German plays that our English-tongued managers and stage societies persist in overlooking.

GALSWORTHY AND OTHERS

By H. L. Mencken

WHAT of Galsworthy? What of dear old John? Is he really a man of genius, as we have all fallen into the habit of assuming, or merely a talented artisan, an honest union man, a Hummel of prose? Does he rank among the top-notchers of his day, race and generation, along with Wells, Shaw, Pinero and George Moore, or only among the respectable second-raters, along with Hewlett, De Morgan, Maurice Baring and Hilaire Belloc? He is a better man, of course, than Granville Barker, but is he better than Arnold Bennett? Than Chesterton? Than Barrie? Or even than Max Beerbohm, E. F. Benson and Henry Arthur Jones? What has he done since "Strife" that surpasses Beerbohm's "Zuleika Dobson"? Or Benson's "Mrs. Ames," or, for that matter, "Dodo"? Or Jones' "The Liars"? Or "The Hypocrites"? Or "Joseph Entangled"?

The more one pursues such embarrassing comparisons, the more, I opine, one loses the enthusiasm that "Strife" set afire. There, indeed, was a drama that stood out from the general like an honest Sunday school superintendent. It was clever, it was thoughtful, it was smashing. A bit wobbly, perhaps, at the start, it soon found its gait, and thereafter it proceeded with the grim inevitability of Ibsen's "A Doll's House." The two plays, in truth, had much in common. Each began conventionally, each swung perilously close to melodrama, and each ended surprisingly, tremendously, magnificently. William Archer, held breathless by the memorable last act of "A Doll's House," with Nora and Helmer brought to grips across the table, felt himself "face to face with a new thing

in drama—an order of experience, at once intellectual and emotional, not hitherto attained in the theater." Some of us got almost the same thrill out of the final scene of "Strife"—that staggering bullfight between John Anthony and Simon Harness, with its irresistible dramatic effectiveness, its compelling humanness, its strange, stimulating uncovering of *der wille zur macht*, the devastating will to power. It was the first appearance of Nietzsche in the drama, the stage debut of Zarathustra. For one, I frankly wallowed in it.

But what has Galsworthy ever done to match "Strife," or even to approach it? Searching him diligently, I can find nothing. "Joy" and "The Silver Box," published with it five or six years ago, were puny and trivial things compared to it, and of the three plays in the volume which followed two years later, only "Justice" made the slightest pretense of rivaling it. And, after all, was there anything new or striking in "Justice"? Wasn't it, in point of fact, a quite obvious piece of moral melodrama, both in plan and in execution? Hadn't we all heard its argument before, not once, but a hundred times? Were we not very well aware that judges were seldom donkeys and the law an obscene jocosity? Were we not certainly informed that prisons made more criminals than they cured, that they converted weak men into still weaker men, that they were inordinately barbarous and ruinous and medieval? I think that we were; and, what is more, I think that these facts had been presented more impressively by earlier reformers. Galsworthy not only used second-hand materials, but he put them together in an uninspired way. In

"Strife" he had thrown a brilliant beam of light into a familiar situation, revealing novel contents, novel implications, novel aspects of it. But in "Justice" he merely lighted anew the old red fire, and what we saw was what we had been seeing all the while.

Leaping "The Pigeon," a sound play, but surely no second "Strife," we come to the latest of the Galsworthy dramas, by name "THE FUGITIVE" (Scribner). The newspaper reviewers greet it respectfully, even reverently. One of them, rising to heights of esoteric encomium, says that it proves that Galsworthy "writes in three dimensions," whatever that may mean. Another says that it "suggests his reserve forces with even greater intensity than any of its predecessors," whatever that may mean. Yet another says that it exhibits "the art of saying the one-hundredth word, carried to an extremely fine point," whatever that may mean. But as for me, the more I examine this youngest fruit of the Galsworthian fancy, the more I am consumed by two horrible suspicions, antagonistic and yet akin. The one is that the whole thing is a deliberate joke, an elaborate attempt to parody and ridicule the so-called problem play, an elephantine *reductio ad absurdum* of Pinero, Sudermann, Jones, Brioux, Hervieu and company, a clumsy experiment in humor by a man never suspected of humor before. And the other is that it is not a deliberate joke, but an unconscious joke.

Consider the piece for yourself. Its central character is one Clare Dedmond, a lady with "large grey mesmeric eyes, one of those women all vibration, iced over with a trained stoicism of voice and manner"—in brief, a West End leading woman, the orthodox Pineroess, Mrs. Pat Campbell, Lena Ashwell. This vibrating Clara, with her mesmeric eyes, is married to George Dedmond, Esq., the honest but unimaginative son of General Sir Charles Dedmond, K.C.B. George is "comely," and "glossily shaved," with hair that is "well brushed"; the general is "an upright, well groomed, grey-moustached, red-faced man of sixty-seven." Life with George, you may be sure, is

anything but agreeable to Clare. Not, of course, that there is anything positively wrong with him. He is not a drinking man; he never notices other women; his bank account and table manners are both highly satisfactory. But—well, if you have ever been to the theater, you know just how it is. The leading woman simply *must* be unhappy, no matter how good her husband. It is as necessary to her trade as hair is to a pianist's. She must wince every time the fellow touches her arm; it must stab her like a knife when he kisses her behind the ear; she must view the natural debaucheries of marriage with unutterable loathing. All this, it may be granted, is opposed to sense, but nevertheless it is the law of the stage.

Enter one Malise, Christian name unknown, a fifth-rate novelist. He is "a tall man, about thirty-five, with a strongly-marked, dark, irregular, ironic face, and eyes which seem to have needles in their pupils"—the standard jackal of the problem play, the home buster, the matrimonial coroner. Clare turns to the fellow irresistibly and as in duty bound. Here at last is one who understands her. Here is a man with a soul. Here is the beyond-George. Malise receives her adoration complacently, and is even willing, one fancies, to venture upon a discreet and occasional weekend, but he is flabbergasted when she comes galloping into his bachelor flat, with her husband and father-in-law, not to mention the family lawyer, at her heels. The contract is a good deal larger than he bargained for. In the first place, he is not so taken with her charms that he wishes to view them while there is work to be done, and in the second place, he hasn't money enough to finance a scandal. If George sues him for damages—in the knightly English way—his royalties will be tied up, and he will be embarrassingly short of money. And no doubt the suit will also cause him to be blacklisted in the offices of all the leading magazines, which are quite as virtuous in England as in the United States. Malise makes a show of facing all these hazards bravely, but Clare sees

how he feels about it, and so she packs her trunk and clears out.

But what to do? She has only a few pounds in money—and no profession, no trade, no talent, not even a profitable vice, such as music. George, it appears, is willing to give her a pension, but she will have none of it. How, then, is she to make a living? Fool that you are to ask! Have you never read a vice report? Are you unaware of What Every Girl of Fifteen Should Know? Do you never go to the theater? Guess once, and I lay ten to one that you guess correctly. . . . What? . . . Even so! Clare buys a couple of gardenias with her last shilling, and then boldly marches into that awful den of iniquity, that mart of white slaves, that immoral West End supper club. At once she makes a mash upon a sentimental young man, and at once he recognizes that she is a Lady, and proposes to take her away. But while he is gone to find a waiter to find a page to find a porter to find a taxicab, two low scoundrels enter and insult her, and she gives it up. That is to say, she swallows something or other out of a blue bottle, and then:

Smiling, she . . . lays the gardenia flowers against her face. [Sic.] Slowly she droops back in her chair; the gardenias drop into her lap; her arms relax; her head falls forward on her breast.

Enter the waiter, Arnaud.

ARNAUD—The boss! Quick! *Monsieur, elle est fuil Elle est morte!*

What are we to think of this amazing piece of rubbish? Is it conceivable that Galsworthy wants us to take it seriously, to swallow its fustian, to be thrilled by its heroics, to shed tears over Clare? I find it almost impossible to believe any such thing. The whole composition has a suspicious air of burlesque from the very first scene—in which two old-fashioned stage servants cheerfully tell us the plot. Not one of the characters is even remotely human. Clare herself, the pivot of the action, is no more than a marionette on a string. Why she dislikes George is never made clear: she merely dislikes him. Nor is there any sufficient show of motive for her invasion of the godless supper club. Certainly such a woman would have friends who

would take her in, get her some sort of work, make a governess or a chorus girl of her, or something of the sort—men friends, in particular, who would be glad to provide for her *a cappella*, if the life be to her taste. Women “of middle height, with a beautiful figure, wavy brown hair, full, smiling lips and large grey mesmeric eyes” do not have to starve to death in our modern Ninevehs, nor do they have to seek their victuals in bordellos. Can it be that Clare is intended to be a lunatic, that the play is a study of insanity? Is Galsworthy trying to depict the effects of the current discussion of sex—so ignorant, so ranting—upon a mush-headed woman? Is he slyly poking fun at the sex play? As for me, I give it up. If the thing is intended seriously, then it is a screaming burlesque. And if it is intended to be burlesque, then it is done too seriously.

The latest of the Galsworthy novels, to wit, “THE DARK FLOWER” (*Scribner*), is also likely to raise bitter doubts in the breasts of the author’s admirers. The thing, in places, is beautifully written, and from end to end there is a poetic quality which is rare in English fiction, but the final impression is one of incoherence, of inconsequence. We never get a very clear understanding of Harold Lennan; he is seen only episodically and in one aspect. There must be other Harolds besides the mere male—for example, Harold the artist, the man of easy means, the citizen, the Englishman. But the only one we meet is the mere male, the victim of feminine lures, the clumsy duellist of sex. First, he has a fantastic, calf love affair with Anna Stormer, the middle-aged wife of his tutor at Oxford. Then, ten years after, there is a stormy pursuit of Olive Cramier, ending in Drury Lane melodrama. And finally, late in the forties, he goes to the brink with Nell Dromore, a wild thing yet in her ’teens—and then discreetly retreats. Three different Lennans here: the sentimental boy, the passionate young man and the wary oldster. They hang together very loosely. Giving them different names, indeed, would make them, at one stroke, quite different men. The result is that “THE DARK FLOWER” is less a

novel than a collection of three novel-ettes. Somewhat less spaciouly written, it would suggest the memorable episodes and character sketches in "A Commentary," perhaps the best work that Mr. Galsworthy has ever done. As it stands, its manner rather overweights its matter. It is much ado artistically about very little psychologically.

Books of plays continue to pile up steadily. The current list includes volumes by Charles Rann Kennedy, Percy Mackaye, Rabindranath Tagore, Björnsterne Björnson, John Masefield and George Bronson-Howard. The Tagore piece need not detain us long. It is called "CHITRA" (*Macmillan*), and is a poetical setting of an ancient Hindoo legend—a thing utterly undramatic, by Western standards, but relieved from dullness by the poet's lush and exotic fancy. Nor is there anything of note in Percy Mackaye's "SANCTUARY" (*Stokes*) save perhaps the fact that its principal role has been played by one of the daughters of Dr. Woodrow Wilson. It was written to serve the propaganda for the protection of wild birds, and, according to the author's preface, was completed, set to music, costumed, rehearsed and acted "within the brief space of a month." A rush job, by my troth, but nevertheless there is some very fair blank verse in it, and no doubt it is effective in performance. In "LITTLE WAX CANDLE," by Louise Norton (*Marie*), there is little save a cheap smartness. The eternal triangle is here augmented to a quadrangle. Both husband and wife have other loves, and the scene is a bedchamber—the bedchamber, that is, of the husband and wife. There is a notice on the page following the title that the "producing rights are retained by the author." Let us hope that she will continue to retain them.

The Björnson book (*Scribner*) is made up of three plays, "LOVE AND GEOGRAPHY," "LABOREMUS" and the second of the two called "BEYOND HUMAN POWER," all of them intelligently translated by Edwin Björkman. Of Mr. Björkman's talents as a critic I am not enamored, nor are my pulses stirred by his incredibly banal epigrams, but he is

a sound translator from the Scandinavian languages, and when he writes about Björnson and Strindberg his accurate and first-hand knowledge makes him worth reading. It is to be hoped that he will one day do a full-length study of Björnson, a writer too much eclipsed abroad by the greater fame of his countryman, Henrik Ibsen. Björnson was not nearly so great a dramatist as Ibsen, but he was a far more interesting man—a fantastic conglomeration of poet and politician, of rabble rouser and philosopher, of artist and mountebank. He remained, to the end of his days, a sort of intellectual *backfisch*, a naïve and boyish fellow, always ready to believe in things, always enthusiastic over this or that. He did not stand remote from life, as Ibsen did, observing it with an ascetic eye: he was a part of it himself, and a very lively part. In brief, the man was full of human weakness, and you will find proofs of it in all of his plays. They may be less true than Ibsen's, but they are always more genial, more confident, more comfortable.

It is rather surprising that these plays are so little known on our own stage, where optimism is the first of virtues. During her American tour, in 1900 or thereabout, Mrs. Patrick Campbell gave a few performances of the first part of "BEYOND HUMAN POWER," and at other times various uplifters of the stage have done "The Newly Married Couple" and "The Gauntlet," but the rest of the Björnson pieces were practically unknown until Mr. Björkman began translating them. Nor is there any satisfactory critical account of the dramatist in English. William Morton Payne's brief sketch, first printed in 1903, was hastily revised and reprinted after Björnson's death in 1910, but it tells a great deal less about him than most of us would like to know. Thus the opportunity lies open to Mr. Björkman. Let him do for "the uncrowned king of Norway" what Edmund Gosse did for Ibsen and Miss Lind-af-Hageby for Strindberg.

The Masefield play, "THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT" (*Macmillan*), is presented as a novelty, but as a matter

of fact it was printed in England more than four years ago, and quickly ran into a second edition. However, old or new, it is something that you cannot afford to miss: an historical play intensely realistic in manner, and written in that vivid, chopped-off prose which Masfield employed with much success in his "Nan." The action has to do with Pompey's great contest with Julius Cæsar, his defeat at Pharsalia and his death in Egypt. The thrill of actual war is in it: it is not only an original and striking piece of writing, but an effective stage play. "THE IDOL BREAKER," by Charles Rann Kennedy (*Harper*), is neither. All I can find in it, in truth, is a somewhat pompous and vapid allegory, in which a loud-mouthed blacksmith (the Wage Slave?) oscillates between his flat-chested, unimaginative wife (the Wage System?) and a buxom, scarlet-clad stranger he meets while drunk (Socialism?). The blacksmith whoops and roars from end to end, making copious use of a vocabulary sure to be regarded as "strong" and "vital" by the old maids, male and female, of the Drama League of America. All the representatives of the Existing Order, that awful thing, are represented as low buffoons. A footnote offers the news that "the music informing this play is Beethoven, pianoforte sonata, *opus* 111." Poor old Ludwig! Imagine the rage of that foe of democracy if he only knew it!

Vastly better stuff is in "THE RED LIGHT OF MARS," by George Bronson-Howard (*Kennerley*), a satirical comedy in which the Devil plays the leading part. He does not appear, however, in his usual Pol Plangon make-up, but makes use of the bodies of the other characters, switching from one to the other with much humor. He enters in that of a fugitive anarchist, jumps into that of a famous scientist, and then makes the situation perfect by putting the anarchist into the body of a predatory plutocrat. This, of course, is comedy that verges on farce, but the fundamental intention of the play is perfectly serious. That intention is to exhibit the pettiness and sordidness and sentimentality of man in the light of the Devil's

superior sense and honesty. The plutocrat is willing to sacrifice everything, including even his own self-respect, to his miserable profits; the anarchist, once there is money in his pocket, hawks, hedges and changes his tune; the scientist, for all his great learning, is as sentimental as a freshman, and lets a silly woman make an ass of him. It is the business of the Devil to rid all these folk of their delusions, and so lift them to a reasonable sureness of vision. That business he accomplishes in a series of very amusing and well wrought scenes. Here are a few strophes of his complaining:

Sentiment and romance make me ill. . . . I suppose that's how the Devil got his bad name. Trying to cure Faust of Marguerite in order to use him for the world's advancement! Same ingratitude; same mix-up; everybody calling me names! . . . Sentiment, always sentiment, maudlin sentiment; that's what keeps abuses unrectified, men ignorant, women slaves, the world's intellectual development no faster than a snail crawls. . . . When the world applauds anybody whole-heartedly, without a dissenting voice, be sure he's a fool or a knave! Your whole being has been in arms against me ever since I came to bring you wisdom. . . . You, who worship a Man of Peace, and make bloody war in His Name; who worship a Prince of Purity, and wed the woman of your lust in His Name; who worship a Poor Man's Christ, and in the same breath those who steal the poor man's bread—in His Name! (*Looks up to the sky.*) You said I had ruled long enough, Crucified One! So you came to do through men's love what I had done through men's hate, lust and greed. So you died for men, and thereafter you called hate anger against the heathen; lust—the woman leading them to holier things; greed—world conquest in Your Name. (*Drops on his knees.*) I see you ever, Son of the Sun, sad and weary in that bright star of your exile; hoping against hope that a stray seed sown two thousand years ago may yet bring men to wisdom through love; while I still go among them to bring them to wisdom through understanding, teaching them that ignorance and hate bring no gain—the only reasoning they can understand. And so sustained by you in your lonely star, while you shine on, hoping men will look up, ever up—I work bitterly among them here below—until I have won wisdom for them and freedom for us; freedom that we may go on to our Father, the Sun, we two exiles; Star of the Morning and Red Light of Mars!

And so on, and so on. In brief, the play has an idea in it, and it is worked out with considerable subtlety and skill. This Mr. Howard is a dramatist who

promises to go far. He has a fine hand for all the conventional tricks of the drama, and to them he adds a very unusual intellectual eagerness, a disposition to take the stage play seriously.

Which brings us to "SECOND NIGHTS," by Arthur Ruhl (*Scribner*), the last of the current stage books. The criticism here encountered is anything but profound, but a genuine love for the drama is visible in it, and so far as it goes it is sound enough. The best chapter, perhaps, is one dealing with the American burlesque show, a form of dramatic entertainment which deserves a good deal more attention from dramatic critics than it has hitherto received. There is a happy avoidance of all discussion of Ibsen, Strindberg, D'Annunzio, Wedekind, Gorki, Hauptmann and Sudermann.

A few books on music drift in, but, alas and alack, no more than a few, for we of English speech are but little given to that sort of reading matter, and not many of our publishers trade in it. German is the language of musical theory and criticism, and it is rapidly becoming the language of music itself, despite the old kingship of Italian. When A. W. Thayer finished the first volume of his monumental life of Beethoven, he at once had it translated into German, and in German it was published. To have printed it in English, at that time, would have been almost as fatuous as printing "The Complete Bartender" in Arabic. And even today, the American who can't read German misses the best there is in current musical literature—for example, Richard Strauss's revision of Berlioz's classical treatise on the orchestra. We take music lightly, futilely, sensuously, without intellectual interest. It is not habitually discussed among us, as books, sports, politics, morals and even painting are discussed. In any American society of pretensions to culture, a man who couldn't give a reasonably accurate definition of "sonnet" or "epic" or "etching" would be set down an ignoramus, but nothing would be thought of it if he failed to define "sonata." I doubt, indeed, if there are five thousand

persons in the whole United States who could do it, even including all the professional musicians and music teachers—two distinct classes, by the way, though they have in common their hatred of music. And yet the sonata form lies at the heart of all the greatest music in the world, and no intelligent comprehension of that music is possible unless its plan and its possibilities are clearly understood. To listen to the "Moonlight Sonata" and not know exactly what a sonata aims to set forth is as imbecile as to listen to an actor and not know the language he is speaking. Americans do both, and profess to enjoy both.

But, as I have said, a stray book on music drifts in now and then—and pleasant the day that brings so penetrating and amusing a one as James Huneker's "OLD FOGY" (*Pressler*). Here is Huneker at his very darnedest: the sage in motley, the comic encyclopedia, the pundit on a spree. Here he lays about him right and left, knocking the reigning idols off their perches, resurrecting the old, old dead and trying to pump the breath into them, lambasting on one page and lauding on the next, lampooning the critics and burlesquing their rubber stamp fustian, extolling Dussek and damning Wagner, swearing mighty oaths by Mozart, and, after him, Strauss—not Richard, but Johann! The Old Fogy, of course, is the thinnest of disguises, a mere veil of gossamer for "Editor" Huneker. There is only one Huneker: *ergo*, there was never any Old Fogy. That solo Huneker, that James *a cappella*, is inimitable, incomparable, almost indescribable. On the one hand, he is a prodigy of learning, a veritable warehouse of musical information, true, half-true and apocryphal; on the other hand, he is a jester who delights in reducing all learning to absurdity. Reading him somehow suggests hearing the "Fifth Symphony" rescored for two fifes, one tambourine in B, one wind machine, two tenor harps, a contrabass oboe, two banjos, eight tubas and "the usual strings." The solid substance is there: every note is struck exactly in the middle—but what outlandish tone colors, what strange, unearthly sounds! It is not

Beethoven, however, who first comes to mind when Huneker is at his tricks, but Papa Haydn—the Haydn of the “Surprise Symphony” and the “Farewell.” There is the same incurable gaiety, the same magnificent irreverence, the same masking of profundity with high spirits. Haydn did more for the symphony than any other man—but he also got more fun out of it than any other man.

“OLD FOGY,” of course, is not to be taken seriously: it is frankly a critical *scherso*, an elaborate piece of fooling. But all the same a serious idea runs through the book from end to end, and that is the idea that music is getting too subjective to be comfortable. The makers of symphonies forget beauty altogether; their one effort is to put all their own petty trials and tribulations into cacophony. Even so far back as Beethoven’s day that autobiographical habit had begun. “Beethoven,” says Old Fogy, “is dramatic, powerful, a maker of storms, a subduer of tempests; but his speech is the speech of a self-centered egotist. He is the father of all the modern melomaniacs, who, looking into their own souls, write what they see therein—misery, corruption, slighting selfishness and ugliness.” Old Ludwig’s groans, of course, we can stand. He was not only a great musician but also a great man. It is just as interesting to hear him sigh and complain as it would be to hear the private prayers of Julius Caesar. But what of Tchaikovsky, with his childish Slavic whining? What of Liszt, with his cheap playacting, his incurable lasciviousness, his plebeian warts? What of Wagner, with his delight in imbecile fables, his popinjay vanity, his soul of a grafter? What of Richard Strauss, with his warmed-over Nietzscheism, his flair for the merely horrible? Old Fogy sweeps them all into his ragbag. If art is to be defined as beauty seen through a temperament, then give us more beauty and cleaner temperaments! Back to the old gods—Mozart and Bach, with a polite bow to Brahms and a sentimental tear for Chopin! Beethoven tried to tell his troubles in his music; Mozart was content to ravish the angels of their harps. And as for Johann Sebastian,

“there was more real musical feeling, uplifting and sincere, in the old St. Thomaskirche in Leipzig . . . than in all your modern symphony and oratorio machine-made concerts” put together.

All this is argued, to be sure, in extravagant terms. Wagner is a mere ghoul and impostor: “The Flying Dutchman” is no more than a parody on Weber, and “Parsifal” is “an outrage against religion, morals and music.” Daddy Liszt is “the inventor of the Liszt pupil,” a bad piano player, “a venerable man with a purple nose—a Cyrano de Cognac nose.” Tchaikovsky is the Slav gone crazy on vodka. He transformed Hamlet into “a yelling man” and Romeo and Juliet into “two monstrous Cossacks, who gibber and squeak at each other while reading some obscene volume.” His “Manfred” is a libel on Byron, who was a libel on God.” And even Schumann is a vanishing star, a literary man turned composer, a pathological case. But, as I have said, a serious idea runs through all this concerto for slapstick and seltzer siphon, and to me, at least, that idea has a plentiful soundness. We are getting too much melodrama, too much vivisection, too much hysteria—and too little music. Turn from Tchaikovsky’s “Manfred” or his “Pathétique” to Mozart’s “Jupiter,” or to Schubert’s “Unfinished,” or Beethoven’s “Eighth”: it is like coming out of a *kaffeeplatsch* into the open air, almost like escaping from a lunatic asylum. The one unmistakable emotion that much of this modern music arouses is a hot longing for form, clarity, coherence, a tune. The snorts and moans of these pothouse Werthers are as irritating, in the long run, as the bawling of a child, the rage of a disappointed job seeker, the squeak of a pig under a gate. One yearns unspeakably for a composer who gives out his pair of honest themes, and then develops them with both ears open, and then recapitulates them unashamed, and then hangs a brisk coda to them, and then shuts up.

Naturally enough, most of the burlers and blubberers of Old Fogy’s abomination are represented in the third volume of Philip H. Goepp’s “Sym-

PHONIES AND THEIR MEANING" (*Lippincott*), for the classical repertoire was dealt with in his first two volumes. Here we have elaborate studies of such things as Tchaikovsky's "Manfred," the symphonic "poems" of Liszt and the "Sinfonia Domestica" of Strauss, but along with them are also studies of less bizarre stuff—for example, Dvůřák's "From the New World" and Rachmaninov's beautiful symphony in E minor, with its magnificent reduction of barbaric materials to civilized and intelligible forms, and its careful avoidance of crocodile tears and mock heroics. Mr. Goepp's job is descriptive rather than critical: what he tries to do is to put each composition before us exactly as it is, with the principal themes duly quoted and the underlying ideas (when they exist) made clear. He very properly shows much respect for Dvůřák, whose day, I believe, is yet to come. Hans von Bülow's fatal phrase, *der bauer im frack*—the peasant in a dress coat—came near settling the poor Bohemian's business. He is yet patronized almost comically by bad musicians and worse critics, and even Huneker doesn't seem to grant him his full stature.

My earnest advice to all those who dismiss "From the New World" as no more than a piece of musical journalism, is that they get the score of it and give it prayerful study. They will find writing of the highest quality in it—the music of a man who had something to say, and who knew how to say it. And if they will then turn to Dvůřák's "Dumky" trio, they will get a lesson in musical clarity, dignity and economy of means. Here the composer runs the whole gamut of moods, and yet he never finds it necessary to yell like a Comanche Indian, or to weep like Marguerite Gautier, or to pile up senseless technical difficulties, to assault the ear with bizarre dissonances, or to depart from the keys and scales of "The Well Tempered Clavier."

Mr. Goepp is rather timorous in his discussion of the negro melodies used in "From the New World." "The whole subject of American and negro folk song," he says, "is new and unexplored." This was written, of course, before the

appearance of Henry E. Krehbiel's "AFRO-AMERICAN FOLK-SONGS" (*Schirmer*), in which the long-delayed exploring is competently done. Mr. Krehbiel quickly disposes of the superstition that the negro folk song is no more than an inept parody of Stephen Foster and the Methodist hymnal. He shows that its markings are as distinct as those of any other folk song, and that it offers a truly enormous supply of material to the intelligent composer. But most of our native music makers still sniff at it in a superior manner, and at Dvůřák for his famous experiments with it. They try to write German music, French music, Neo-Russian music, anything but American music. Meanwhile, the mine has been diligently worked by the ex-barbers and professors who write for the vaudeville theater and the dance hall, and their bungled American music has conquered the world. No European is in any doubt about the nativity of its idioms: he recognizes them the moment he hears them.

But our educated musicians continue to cabbage their tunes from Schubert and Mendelssohn and the rest of their baggage from Wagner, Debussy, Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss. One recalls the days of Rossini worship in Vienna, and the struggles of Beethoven to put it down. We'll have to wait a long, long while for our Ludwig, but meanwhile, why not a Weber, a Glinka, or at least a Balakirev or a Grieg?

There are more books at hand demanding attention, but space is limited. Looking over the lot, I find another book on music, just arrived, a novel built around Liszt as a central figure. A "humorous novel," the legend on the cover states. A word of praise from a noted author is also quoted. I lay it aside for further examination with a good deal of anticipation.

I note also a book of poems bearing the exalting title "INTIMATIONS OF HEAVEN." It is the work of H. E. Walker, and may perchance be worth perusal for my soul's good. There is a book on dreams, and another on the un wisdom or immorality of a low birth rate. But all these must wait. Till next month then, *adios*.